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# HARPER'S HANDY SERIES



## Issued Weekly

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JANUARY 29, 1886

Subscription Price  
per Year, 52 Numbers, \$15

Entered at the Post-Office at New York, as Second-class Mail Matter

## STORIES OF PROVENCE

FROM THE FRENCH OF ALPHONSE DAUDET

(*LETTRES DE MON MOULIN*)

BY S. L. LEE

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*Books you may hold readily in your hand are the most useful, after all*  
DR. JOHNSON

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS

1886




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# STORIES OF PROVENCE.

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## INTRODUCTION.

“IN presence of Maître Honorat Grapazi, notary, appeared

“Mr. Gaspard Mitifio, husband of Vivette Cornille, manager at place known as ‘The Cigalières’ and there residing,

“Who, by these presents, has sold and conveyed, free of debts and mortgages,

“To Mr. Alphonse Daudet, poet, resident of Paris,

“A windmill, situated in the valley of the Rhone, in the heart of Provence, on a little hill-side covered with pine and oak trees; said mill having for upward of twenty years been abandoned and out of repair, as by the wild vines, mosses, rosemary, and other creepers climbing to the very top of its fan attested.

“Notwithstanding, in its present state, with its broken wheel, and with grass growing in the bricks of its platform, said Mr. Alphonse Daudet avers that



he finds it well suited to his poetic undertakings, that he accepts it at his own risk and peril, and without recourse against the vender on account of repairs.

“This sale has taken place in presence of the notaries and undersigned witnesses, full amount of the stipulated sum having been paid over to Mr. Mitifio and receipt given.

“Done at Pampérigouste, in the Honorat office, in presence of Francet Mamaï, fifer, and Louiset Le Quigne, cross-bearer for the White Penitents, who, with the parties and the notary have signed after reading.”

---

What astonished rabbits they were! They had so long seen the mill closed and its walls and platform overgrown with weeds, that they had come to believe the race of millers to be extinct, and finding the place convenient, had chosen it as their head-quarters, a centre, as it were, of strategic operations—a rabbits' Jemappes' mill. The night of my arrival there must have been at least twenty, seated in a circle on the platform, about warming their feet in a ray of moonlight. There was but just time to open a dormer window, when frr-rt! here is the whole bivouac put to rout and scampering off, their tails high in the air, showing their little white hind-legs as they disappear in the thicket. I hope they will return.



Some one else was greatly astonished at sight of me. This was a sinister old owl with a meditative face, who had inhabited the mill for some twenty years. I found him in the upper story, sitting motionless on the horizontal shaft amid the fallen tiles and rubbish. He gazed at me a moment out of his round eye, and frightened at not recognizing me, set up a "Hou! hou!" slowly flapping his dust-covered wings (these greatest of musers—they never brush themselves!) But in despite of his blinking eyes and scowling mien, this silent lodger pleases me better than any other, and I hastened to renew his lease. He will keep as before the upper story with an entrance by the roof, while I reserve for myself the apartment below; a small whitewashed room, with a ceiling low, and vaulted like a convent refectory.

It is there that I am writing, with my door opened wide to the bright sunshine. A pretty pine wood, sparkling with light, covers the hill-side in front of me. On the horizon the sharp peaks of the Alps are clearly outlined. Not a sound—barely at intervals the note of a fife, a curlew in the lavender, the tinkle of a mule-bell along the road. All this lovely Provençal landscape lives only by the light.

And now, how would you have me regret your noisy, smoky Paris? I am so content here in my mill! It is the very corner I have longed for, a little, perfumed, warm nook, a thousand leagues' dis-



tance from newspapers, hacks, and fog. And then what pretty objects I see around me! I have been here barely a week, and already my brain is filled with impressions and recollections. Only yesterday I was witness to the return of the flocks to a farm at the foot of the hill; and I declare to you that I would not have exchanged the spectacle for all the premières you have had in Paris this week. Judge for yourself.

I must explain that it is the custom in Provence to send the cattle to the Alps when the warm season begins. Beasts and men pass five or six months there, sleeping in the open air in grass waist-high. With the first breath of autumn they return to the farm, to browse tranquilly on the gray hillocks perfumed with rosemary. Yesterday evening the flocks returned. All day long the gate had stood wide open expecting them, and the folds were filled with fresh straw. From time to time you might hear, "Now they are at Eyguières" "Now they are at Paradou"—and towards evening a great shout—"Here they come!" and the drove was seen advancing in a glory of dust. First came the savage old rams with their horns; behind them the largest of the sheep, the mothers a trifle weary, with their nurse-lings between their feet; the mules, with their red topknots, bearing the lamblings of a day old in baskets, and rocking them as they walked; then the



dogs, sweating, with their tongues hanging to the ground; and, lastly, two tall shepherds with red serge cloaks down to their feet, like copes.

All these defiled gayly before me, and rushed through the gate with a pattering like a shower of rain. You should have seen the excitement inside! The blue-and-gold peacocks welcomed them from their roosts with a trumpet-cry, the sleeping fowls started up with a bound; all were on their feet—pigeons, ducks, turkeys, guinea-fowls; the hens talked of spending the night. One would think each sheep had brought away in its wool, together with a scent of wild Alps, a little of the sharp mountain air that intoxicates and makes one dance.

It was in the midst of all this hubbub that the flocks gained their shelters. The old rams were melted to see once more their familiar cribs, the little lambs born during the absence gazed about them in bewilderment. But the most touching sight of all was the dogs, the brave shepherd dogs, busied with their flocks and with eyes for nothing else. In vain the guard-dog called to them from his kennel; the bucket at the well, filled with fresh water, beckoned them in vain; they could see or hear nothing till the beasts were housed, till the great latchet of the lattice gate was dropped, and the shepherds seated at table in the basement. Then and only then could they be tempted to make for their kennels, and



there, while lapping their soup, relate to their comrades of the farm the things they had seen in the mountains yonder—a dark country, where there are wolves, and purple foxglove brimming over with the dew.



## MAÎTRE CORNILLE'S SECRET.

FRANCET MAMAÏ, fifer, who comes now and then to pass an evening with me, told me the other day the story of a little village tragedy of which my mill was witness some twenty years ago. The old codger's story touched me, and I will try to tell it you as 'twas told to me.

Fancy, dear readers, that you are seated before an aromatic wine-jug and that an old fifer is talking to you.

Our country, dear sir, has not always been sleepy and void of renown as you see it to-day. In former days a great milling business was done here, and for ten leagues around people from the farms would bring us their grain to grind. To right and left nothing was to be seen but fans turning in the mistral above the pine-trees, troops of little donkeys, laden with bags, ascending and descending the hills, and all the week long it did one good to hear the crackling of whips, the creaking of sails, and the "Dia hue!" of the millers' boys. On Sundays we would all flock to the mills in troops, the miller would be there dealing out muscat, his wife and daughters



pretty as queens with their lace fichus and gold crowns. I would bring my fife, and there would be a dancing of farandoles till away into the night. It was the mills, you must know sir, that made the joy and riches of our country.

Unhappily, it came into the heads of some Frenchmen from Paris to build a steam-mill on the Tarascon road, "all fine and new," as they say with us. People took to sending their grain to the steam-mills and the poor windmills were left with nothing to do. For a while they tried to struggle along, but steam proved the stronger, and one by one they were forced to shut up. The little donkeys were seen no more, the pretty miller girls sold their gold crowns—no more muscat—no more farandole. The mistral blew in vain, the fans were motionless. At last, one fine day the commune levelled all these abandoned ruins to the ground, and vines and olives were planted in their stead.

But one mill still held its own amid all this havoc, and continued turning valiantly on its little hillock in the very teeth of the steam-mills. This was Maître Cornille's mill, the very same where we are now passing the evening.

Maître Cornille was an old miller who had lived in flour for sixty years and was a fanatic in his profession. The establishing of the steam-mills had fairly driven him mad. For eight hours he had run



to and fro in the village trying to stir up the inhabitants, shouting at the top of his lungs that villains were trying to poison Provence with steam-mill flour.

"Keep away from them!" he vociferated, "keep away from these rascals that make flour by steam, an invention of the devil, instead of the wind which is the breath of the good God." And so he went on with no end of fine words to the praise of wind-mills. But nobody listened.

In a fit of spleen the old man shut himself up in his mill and lived all alone like a wild beast. Not even his grandchild Vivette, a girl fifteen years old, who since the death of her parents had only her "grandy" in the world, was permitted to stay with him. The poor girl, compelled to work for her living, would hire herself out at the farms for harvest-time, or the olive or silk-worm season. And yet her grandfather seemed fond of her too, and would sometimes walk four leagues in the hot sun to see her at the *mas* where she was at work, and would spend whole hours looking at her and weeping.

The people in the country around said that the old man had sent Vivette away out of stinginess, and that it was a shame for him to suffer the poor child to be dragged from farm to farm, exposed to the brutalities of the *baïles* and all the annoyances of a young girl at service. It was pitiful, too, to see a man like Maître Cornille, who had always been re-



spected, going about the streets ragged and barefoot like a tramp. And the fact is, when he would come to mass of a Sunday, we old folks felt positively ashamed for him, and he felt ashamed himself, for, instead of taking a seat on the bench with us, he stayed at the farther end of the church, with the beggars, by the holy water.

Aside from all this, there was a mystery about Maître Cornille that none of us could fathom. It was a long time since any of the villagers had carried their grain to him to grind, and still his fan went on turning the same as ever, and of an evening we would meet the old miller on the road, driving his donkey laden with bags before him.

"Good-evening to you, Maître Cornille," the neighbors would call out. "So your mill is still running?"

"Still running, children," the old man would answer, gayly. "Thank the Lord there is no lack of work."

If any one asked, "And where the deuce does the work come from?" he would place his finger on his lips and answer with an air of solemn importance,

"Motus! I work for the exportation!" And not another syllable could be got out of him.

As for putting one's nose inside of the mill, no one dreamed of it. When any one passed the door was always closed, the great fan flying, the old donkey browsing on the weeds of the platform, and a big



lean cat sat curled up on the window-sill, eying you maliciously.

All this mystery created a deal of talk. There was no one but had his own explanation of Maître Cornille's secret, but it was whispered about that there were more bags of crowns in that mill than bags of flour.

But at last it all came out, and this was how.

As I was playing my fife one day for the young people to dance, I observed that the oldest of my boys and the little Vivette loved each other. I was pleased to see it, for the name of Cornille was held in honor among us, and I thought it would be a pleasant thing to have this little sparrow of a Vivette hopping about my house. But as the lovers had frequent opportunities of being together I wanted to see the affair settled, so I went to the mill to speak to the old grandfather. What a reception I had from him, the old wizard! He couldn't be prevailed on to open the door, so I had to explain myself as best I could through the key-hole, with the big lean cat snoring like the devil over my head.

But the old man wouldn't let me finish. He shouted out to me very roughly to go back to my flute, and if I was in a hurry to marry my son I might look up a girl at the steam-mill. Fancy how my blood boiled at being spoken to like that, but I



prudently restrained myself, and, leaving the old madman to his mill, I returned to tell the children of my discomfiture. They couldn't believe it, poor lambs, and begged that we might all go together and speak to the grandfather. I hadn't the heart to refuse them, so off I started with my pair of lovers.

When we arrived at the mill Maître Cornille had just gone out. He had double-locked the door, but had left his ladder outside, and the idea came into the children's heads to get in at the window and see what this famous mill contained.

It proved to be empty! There was not a bag of flour, not a grain of wheat, not an atom of flour on the walls or clinging to the cobwebs, none of the pleasant, fresh fragrance of crushed wheat. The horizontal shaft was covered with dust, and the big lean cat fast asleep on the window.

In the room below there was the same air of poverty and abandonment—a wretched bed, a morsel of bread on one of the steps, and in a corner several bags that had burst, out of which sand and rubbish were spilling.

This was Maître Cornille's secret. It was this trash that he carried over the roads every evening to save the honor of his mill, and have it appear that flour was still ground in it. Poor mill! Poor Cornille! Though the steam-mills had long ago robbed



him of his last customer, his fan still turned, but it turned on empty air.

The children were in tears as they came to tell me what they had seen. Their story went to my heart. Without losing a moment I ran to the neighbors, told it them in a few words, and we agreed to carry at once to Maître Cornille's mill all the wheat in our granaries.

No sooner said than done. The whole village set out, and we arrived at the mill with our procession of donkeys laden with wheat—real wheat this time. The mill door stood open. Before it sat Maître Cornille on a bag of rubbish, his head buried in his hands, sobbing. He had just discovered that some one had entered his mill in his absence and surprised his secret.

"Nothing is left me but to die!" he said. "The mill is dishonored!" And he wept and sobbed to break one's heart, calling his mill by all sorts of endearing names, talking to it as if it had been a real living person.

At this moment the donkeys arrived before the door, and we all began to shout, as in the old mill-ing days, "Ohay! for the mill! Ohay! Maître Cornille!" And soon we had the bags piled up against the door, and the beautiful red grain spilling out in all directions.

Maître Cornille opened his eyes wide. He took



some of the wheat in the hollow of his old hand, laughing and crying at once.

"It is wheat, blessed Lord! real wheat! Let me alone while I look at it." Then turning to us, "Ah! I knew you would come back to me; the steam-millers are rascals."

We wanted to carry him in triumph through the town. "No, no, my children," he said, "I must first feed my mill. Think how long since it has swallowed a morsel!"

And the tears were in all our eyes as we saw the old man busying himself right and left, emptying the bags, and looking at the mill as the grain crumbled and the fine powder flew to the ceiling.

It is but justice to ourselves to add that from this time we never suffered the old miller to want for work.

But at last Maître Cornille died, and the fan of our last mill ceased to turn, this time forever. What would you have, sir? All things come to an end in this world, and we must believe that windmills too have had their day, together with track-boats on the Rhone, parliaments, and flowered jackets.



## THE POPE'S MULE.

OF all the pretty sayings, proverbs, or adages with which our Provençal peasants interlard their discourse, I know of none more picturesque or more singular than this. For leagues around my mill it is the custom to say, in speaking of a rancorous, vindictive man, "Beware of that man; he is like the pope's mule, he keeps his kick seven years."

I tried for a long time to ascertain the origin of this proverb—what was meant by this papal mule, and this kick kept seven years. But no one could throw any light on the question, not even Francet Mamaï, my fifer, though he has his Provençal legendary lore at his fingers' ends. Francet thinks with me that it must have reference to some ancient chronicle of Avignon. "You will find that only in the library of the cicadas," he said to me, with a laugh. The idea struck me as a good one, and the cicada's library being right at my door, I shut myself up in it for a week.

It is a beautiful library, admirably well stocked, open to the poets day and night, and served by little librarians with cymbals that make music for you all



the time. I passed several delicious days there; and after a week's research—on my back—I found at last what I wanted—that is, the story of my mule and the kick kept seven years. It is a pretty story, albeit a trifle *naïf*, and I will try to tell it you as I read it yesterday morning in a time-colored manuscript, with a delicious scent of dry lavender, and with large cobwebs for clasps.

Whoever did not see Avignon in the days of the popes has seen nothing. For gayety, life, animation, feasting, never was there such a city. From morning till night there were processions and pilgrimages, streets strewn with flowers, high-warp tapestry, cardinals arriving by the Rhone, banners flying, galleys streaming, the pope's soldiers chanting their Latin on the squares, mendicant friars with their rattles; and from top to bottom of the houses that swarmed about the papal palace like bees about their hive, there was the tic-tac of lace-makers, the flying of shuttles weaving the gold of the chasubles, the little hammers of cruet-carvers, the tuning of sounding-boards, the songs of warping-women; and above all this, the ringing of bells, and always a few drums rolling on the bridge. For with us, when the people are happy they must dance, and the streets being too narrow for the farandole, fifes and drums were posted on the Avignon bridge, and day and night they danced in the fresh air from the Rhone. Ah, happy days!



happy city! days of halberds that did not cut, and prisons used for storing wine! No famine! no war! This is how the Avignon popes understood governing their people. This is why their people so sorely regretted them.

There was one in particular, a good old pope named Boniface. What rivers of tears flowed in Avignon when he died! He was so amiable, so handsome a prince! He smiled to you so benignly from the back of his mule, and whether you were the poor madder dyer or the great "*viguier*" of the town, gave you his blessing so civilly as he passed! A real Pope of Yvetot, but a Provençal Yvetot, with something sly in his laugh, a bunch of marjoram in his berretta, and not the least Jenny. The only Jenny this good father had ever known was his vine—a little vine which he had planted himself three leagues from Avignon, among the myrtles of Chateauneuf.

Every Sunday after vespers the worthy man would go to pay his court to her; and when there, seated in the bright sun, his mule at his side and his cardinals all around, he would uncork a bottle of his own wine, the beautiful red wine since known as Chateauneuf-des-papes, and sip it slowly while he gazed lovingly at his vine. Then, when the bottle was emptied and the sun gone down, he returned gayly to the town, followed by his whole chapter; and when he passed the drums on the bridge, his mule, intoxicated by the



music, would set off in a little canter, the pope himself keeping time with his berretta, to the scandal of the cardinals, but which made all the people say, "Ah! the good prince, the dear pope!"

Next to his Chateauneuf vine, what the pope loved best in the world was his mule. In fact the good man doted on his beast. Every night before retiring to rest he went himself to see if the stable-door was shut close, the crib well filled; and he never rose from table without seeing prepared under his own eyes a large bowl of French wine with plenty of sugar and spices, which he carried her himself, regardless of the strictures of his cardinals.

It is proper to add that the animal was not unworthy of the trouble. She was a beautiful black mule, speckled red, with a shining skin and large, full croup, sure of foot, carrying proudly her little head all bedizened with knots and bows and silver bells; withal gentle as a lamb, with an artless eye and two long ears always shaking, which gave her an easy, good-natured air. All Avignon respected her, and when she passed along the streets there was no sort of civility they did not show her. For in truth everybody knew this to be the surest way of winning favor at court, and that with all her innocent air the pope's mule had helped many a one on the road to fortune, as witness Tistet Védène and his wonderful career.



This Tistet Védène was an impudent, worthless varlet, whom his father, the gold-carver, had turned out-of-doors because he could not be made to work and demoralized his apprentices. For six months he might have been seen dragging his jacket in the Avignon gutters, but generally in the neighborhood of the papal mansion; for the scamp entertained ideas of his own with regard to the pope's mule, and very designing ones they were as will be seen.

One day when his Holiness was walking alone under his walls with his beast, Tistet Védène approached, and clasping his hands in an ecstasy, exclaimed,

“Oh, *mon Dieu!* great Holy Father, what a beautiful mule! Stop a moment while I look at her! Oh, Pope! what a mule! The Emperor of Germany hasn't such an animal!” And he caressed her and spoke softly to her, as if she had been a girl. “Come, my darling, my treasure, my sweet love!” And the good pope, all melted, said to himself, “What a nice little boy! what pretty ways he has with my mule!” And do you know what happened? The next day Tistet Védène exchanged his yellow jacket for a beautiful lace alb, a crimson silk camail, and buckled shoes, and entered the pope's household, which had never before received any but sons of nobles and nephews of cardinals. So much for diplomacy. But Tistet did not stop here.



Once established in the pope's service the rascal continued the game which had succeeded so well. Insolent to the rest of the world, he was all thoughtfulness and attention to the mule. He was constantly to be met in the palace court with a handful of oats or bundle of sainfoin, shaking the red clusters as he looked towards the Holy Father's balcony, as much as to say, "Who is this for?" Till at last the good pope ended by intrusting to him the entire care of the stable and the office of carrying the mule her bowl of French wine—which didn't make the cardinals laugh.

Neither did it make the mule laugh. Now, when the hour for her wine came, she always saw approaching five or six little boys attached to the household, with their camails and lace. Another moment and the stable was filled with a warm scent of caramels and spices, and Tistet Védène would appear, carefully carrying a bowl of French wine. Then the poor beast's martyrdom would begin.

This perfumed wine which she loved so, which kept her warm, which lent her wings, they had the cruelty to bring to her crib, to make her smell it, and then, when her nostrils were filled with the aroma of the beautiful ruby liquor, it would all be poured down the throats of these varlets. And as if to steal her wine were not enough, after they had been drinking they became like so many little devils.



One would pull her ears, another her tail. Quiquet would mount on her back, Béloquet would try his berretta on her, and not one of the rascals once reflected that the good creature, if she pleased, could launch a kick at them that would send them to the North Star, if not farther. But no! it is not for nothing that one is a papal mule, the mule of benedictions and indulgences. Do what they might she would not lose her temper with the boys; it was only Tistet Védène that she had hard thoughts of; she felt an itching in her hoofs when he was behind her. And indeed she had good cause—this scamp of a Tistet played her such ugly tricks. There was no end to his cruel inventiveness after he had drunk her wine.

One day he took into his head to make her climb with him into the bell-tower on the top of the palace. This is no fable that I am about to relate. Two hundred thousand Provençals saw it. Picture to yourself the unlucky mule, when, after turning and turning in a spiral staircase and climbing I don't know how many steps, she suddenly found herself on a platform sparkling with light, and saw, a thousand feet below her, a whole fantastic Avignon—market, shops no bigger than nuts, the pope's soldiers looking like red ants before their barracks; on a silver thread a microscopic bridge where they danced. Ah! how terrified the poor beast was! She raised



a cry that made all the windows in the palace rattle.

"What is the matter? what are they doing to her?" exclaimed the good pope, rushing out on the balcony.

Tistet Védène was already on the balcony, weeping and wringing his hands.

"Ah! great Holy Father, the matter is that your mule—*mon Dieu!* what is to become of us?—your mule has climbed into the bell-tower."

"All alone???"

"Yes, great Holy Father, all alone. Look up yonder. Don't you see her ears passing? you might think they were two swallows."

"*Miséricorde!*" exclaimed the pope, rolling his eyes, "she has gone mad! she will kill herself! Will you come down, wretched beast?"

Come down! She would have asked nothing better, but how? The stairs were not to be thought of; they might be climbed, but as for coming down, that would be to run a hundred risks of breaking her neck. And as the poor mule, in deep distress, walked round and round the platform, her large eyes full of vertigo, she thought of Tistet Védène.

"Ah! rascal! if I catch you again! what a kick I shall have for you to-morrow!"

This idea of the kick put a little heart in her, and gave her strength to stand on her feet; otherwise she would have dropped.



At last they came to take her down, and it was no trifling matter. She had to be lowered with a screw-jack, ropes, and a litter. And fancy what a humiliation for the poor mule to see herself suspended from such a height, her feet dangling like a June bug at the end of a string! And all Avignon looking on!

The poor beast never slept a wink that night. She seemed to be still turning, turning, around that accursed platform, with all the town below laughing. Then she thought of the infamous Tistet Védène, and of the kick she would send him next morning. They should see the smoke of it all the way to Pampelune.

But while this handsome reception was being prepared for him, what, think you, was Tistet Védène doing? Sailing down the Rhone, singing, on his way to the Court of Naples, with a troop of young nobles who were sent every year to practise themselves in diplomacy and fine manners. Tistet Védène was not a noble, but the pope felt that he owed him something for his attentions to his mule, especially for the activity he had displayed on the day of the rescue.

What a disappointed mule that was the next morning! "The rascal! he suspected something!" thought she, shaking her bells with fury. "But no matter, you shall have it yet. I will keep it for you!" And she kept it for him.



After Tistet's departure the pope's mule resumed the old even tenor of her ways. There was no more Quiquet nor Béloquet. The good old days of French wine returned, and with them good humor, long siestas, and her little amble as she passed the bridge. Since her adventure, however, she could not but remark that the towns-people treated her a trifle coolly. There were whisperings as she passed, the old people would shake their heads, the children would laugh and point to the bell-tower. Even the good pope seemed to have lost a little of his old confidence in his friend, and when he would fall into a doze on her back was never without an uneasy after-thought: "What if I should awake to find myself on the bell-tower!" The mule saw all this, and suffered in silence. Only when the name of Tistet Védène was mentioned in her hearing, her long ears would quiver, and with a little chuckle she would sharpen her iron hoofs on the pavement.

Matters went on thus for seven years, and then Tistet Védène returned from the Court of Naples. His time there had not expired, but he had learned that the pope's premier moutardier had just died suddenly, and the place being a good one, had returned in haste to enter the lists.

When this intriguer of a Védène entered the hall of the palace the Holy Father scarcely recognized him, he was grown so much taller and stouter. It



must be added that the old pope himself had aged, and could no longer see without his glasses. But Tistet was nothing daunted.

“What! great Holy Father! you do not recognize me? It is I, Tistet Védène.”

“Védène?”

“Yes; don't you know?—that used to carry the French wine to your mule.”

“Ah! yes, yes, I remember; an excellent little fellow, Tistet Védène. And what is it you want of us?”

“Oh, not much, great Holy Father. I came to ask you—by-the-way, have you your mule still? And is she well? Ah! I am glad!—I came to ask you for the place of the premier moutardier who has just died.”

“Premier moutardier! You! But you are too young. What is your age?”

“Twenty years and two months, illustrious pontiff—just five years older than your mule. Ah! *palme de Dieu!* the dear, good creature; if you knew how I loved that mule, how I pined for her in Italy! Will you not let me see her?”

“Yes, my child, you shall see her; and since you love the dear beast so I will not suffer you to live apart. From this day I attach you to my person in the capacity of premier moutardier. My cardinals will cry out, but I am used to that. Come to us to-



morrow, and we will invest you with the insignia of your office in presence of all the chapter. After that I will take you to see the mule, and you shall accompany me to visit the vine. Ha! ha!"

Whether Tistet Védène was happy as he quitted the great hall, with what impatience he waited for the ceremony of the next day, it is needless to relate. But some one else in the palace was even happier and more impatient than he. This was the mule. From the time of Tistet's return till vespers the next day she never ceased to stuff herself with oats, and to draw close to the wall with her hind feet.

She, too, was preparing for the ceremony.

The next day, vespers being over, Tistet Védène made his entry in the court of the papal palace. All the high clergy were there—the cardinals in red robes, the devil's advocate in black velvet, the monastery abbés with their little mitres, the wardens of Saint Agrico, the pope's household in their crimson camails, the lower clergy, the pope's soldiers in full dress, the three orders of penitents, the hermits of Mount Ventour, the sacristans in their judges' robes, the little clerk heading the procession with the hand-bell—all, all, to the dispensers of holy water, the lighter and extinguisher—not one was missing. Ah! it was a grand ceremony—bells, petards, sunshine, music, and, as ever, the frenzied drum leading the dance on the bridge.



When Védène made his appearance, with his handsome person and fine bearing, a murmur of admiration ran through the assemblage. He was a magnificent Provençal of the blond type, with hair curling at the ends, and a wanton little beard that might have been made of the filings that fell from the graver of his father, the sculptor in gold. Rumor said that the fingers of Queen Jeanne had toyed with this golden beard, and the Sire de Védène had in truth the distraught and self-conscious air of the men whom queens have loved. To-day he had, in honor of his country, substituted for his Neapolitan vestments a red-bordered jacket *à la Provençal*, and on his chaperon there floated a large plume of the ibis of Camargue.

When he entered, the premier moutardier bowed with a knightly grace, and turned to the grand steps where the pope was waiting to invest him with the insignia of his rank—the yellow boxwood spoon and the saffron coat. The mule was at the foot of the steps, caparisoned and ready to set out for the vine. Tistet smiled as he passed close to her, and paused a moment to give her a few friendly taps on the back, glancing out of the corner of his eye to see whether the pope was observing. Now was her chance! The position was excellent. “Here, rascal! take that! I have kept it for you seven years.” And she launched him a kick so terrible, so terrible,



that all the way to Pampelune they saw a whirlwind of golden smoke out of which fluttered an ibis plume. It was all that remained of the unfortunate Tistet Védène.

The kicks of mules are not commonly so terrific, it is true, but this was a papal mule, and then it had been kept seven years. A better example of ecclesiastical rancor could hardly be found.



## MR. SEGUIN'S GOAT.

You will be always the same, my poor Gringoire. What! they offer you the position of reporter on a good Paris newspaper and you actually refuse! Look about you, my poor young man. See this tattered doublet, these shoes down at the heels, this emaciated face, all telling their tale of hunger and want. This is what your passion for pretty rhyming will bring you to, this is what ten years' faithful service to Sire Apollo are worth. Is it not enough to make one hang one's head?

Become a reporter, imbecile, become a reporter. You will win beautiful gold crowns, have your seat at Brébant's, and be able to exhibit yourself on première days with a new pen at your ear.

You will not? You will preserve your freedom at any cost? Listen, then, to the story of Mr. Seguin's goat. You will see what it is to resolve to be free.

Mr. Seguin never had any luck with his goats.

He lost them all in the same way: one fine morning they broke their chains, fled to the mountain, and



the wolf ate them. Nothing could stop them—neither the kindness of their master nor their fear of the wolf. These, you will observe, were independent goats, who must have fresh air and freedom at any price.

The good Mr. Seguin, not understanding the character of his goats, was confounded. He said to himself, "It is no use, they all get tired of me; I shall never keep one."

However, he would not be disheartened, but after losing six goats in the same way, he bought a seventh, only this time he took care to secure a very young one, hoping he might accustom it to living with him.

Ah, Gringoire! how pretty it was, with its soft eyes, handsome military beard, shining black hoofs, striped horns, and long white hair like a great-coat. It was nearly as charming as Esmeralda's kid—you remember, Gringoire? and then so docile, letting herself be milked without budging or ever putting her foot in the pail. A very love of a little goat.

Behind Mr. Seguin's house was a space enclosed by a hawthorn hedge. Here he established his new lodger, taking care to give her plenty of rope, and from time to time going to see if all was well. The goat was very happy, and browsed with such good will that Mr. Seguin was enchanted. "At last," said the poor man to himself, "I have a goat who will not grow *ennuyé* with me."



Mr. Seguin was mistaken. The goat did grow *ennuyé*.

One day she looked up to the mountain, and said to herself,

"How nice it must be to be up there and play in the heather without this accursed tether always chafing one's neck. It is all very well for the ox or the ass to browse in an enclosure, but goats should roam at large."

From this time her grass became insipid, she began to fall off and gave but little milk. Indeed, it was sad to see her pulling all day on her rope, with her head turned to the mountain, her nostrils distended, whining a melancholy "M—a!"

Mr. Seguin saw that something was amiss with his goat, but was quite at a loss to guess the cause of it. One morning when he had done milking her, she turned, and said to him in her patois,

"I am tired of staying here, Mr. Seguin; let me go to the mountain."

"Ah! *mon Dieu!* this one too!" exclaimed Mr. Seguin, stupefied, and letting fall his pail. Then seating himself on the grass by the side of his goat,

"What, Blanquette, you wish to leave me?"

"Yes, Mr. Seguin," answered Blanquette.

"Is there not plenty of grass here?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Seguin."



"Perhaps you are tied too short. Shall I lengthen your rope?"

"It is not worth while, Mr. Seguin."

"Then what is it you want?"

"I want to go to the mountain."

"But, poor thing, do you not know there are wolves in the mountain? What will you do when one of them finds you?"

"I will fight him with my horns, Mr. Seguin."

"The wolf would laugh at your horns. He has devoured many a goat with very different horns from yours. You know old Renaude that was here last year? She was strong and brave, and vicious as a he-goat. She fought the wolf all night, and in the morning the wolf ate her."

"Poor Renaude! But let me go to the mountain, Mr. Seguin."

"Merciful heavens!" said poor Mr. Seguin. "What have they done to my goats? But no! I will save you in spite of yourself; and for fear you should break your rope, I will shut you up in the stable, and there you shall remain."

Hereupon Mr. Seguin carried his goat to a dark stable and double-locked the door. But, unluckily, he forgot the window, and no sooner was his back turned than the goat was off.

You smile, Gringoire? *Parbleu!* I believe you take sides with the goat, and against good Mr. Seg-



uin. We shall see whether you will smile presently.

When the white goat arrived in the mountain she was welcomed with the greatest demonstrations of delight. Never had the old pine-trees seen anything so pretty. They all received her like a little queen. The chestnuts bent down to the ground to caress her with their branches, the golden broom opened to let her pass, and sent out its sweetest perfume; the whole mountain celebrated her coming.

You may fancy, Gringoire, whether our goat was happy! No more rope, no more stake; she could gambol and browse at her pleasure. And what grass! Up to her horns, my dear; savory, fine, dentated, made of a thousand herbs, very different indeed from the turf of the enclosure. And the flowers! Big blue bell-flowers, long-calyxed purple foxglove, a whole forest of wild flowers brimming over with intoxicating juices.

The white goat, fairly surfeited, capered here and there, tossing her limbs in the air, rolling along the mountain sides pell-mell with the fallen leaves and the chestnuts. Then with a sudden bound she is on her feet again, and hop! she is off, with her head stuck forward, now on a peak, now in the bottom of a ravine, up and down and everywhere. One would have supposed there were ten of Mr. Seguin's goats in the mountain.



This is to say that our Blanquette was afraid of nothing.

She cleared with a bound the broad, rushing streams, getting splashed with mud and foam; then, all dripping, would stretch herself out on a rock, and dry herself in the sun. Once, as she came to the edge of a plateau with a laburnum in her mouth, she saw down below, away down below in the plain, the house of Mr. Seguin, with the enclosure in the rear. It made her laugh till the tears came.

“What a little place!” she said; “how did it ever hold me?”

Poor thing! seeing herself perched so high, she thought herself at least as large as the world.

To sum up, it was a fine day for Mr. Seguin's goat. About the middle of the day, as she was scampering hither and thither, she came in with a flock of chamois in the act of munching a wild vine. They invited her to the best place at the vine, and the gentlemen were most gallant in their attentions to her. It even seemed that a certain young chamois had the good-fortune to please Blanquette. The two strolled through the woods together for an hour or two. If you would know what they said, ask the babbling brooks that run invisible in the moss.

Suddenly the wind blew up fresh. The mountains began to assume a violet tint; evening was come.



"Already!" said the little goat, and she stopped, astonished.

Below, the fields were flooded with mist. Mr. Seguin's enclosure was lost to view behind the fog; nothing was to be seen but the roof and a curl of smoke. She listened to the bells of a flock that was being driven home. A falcon grazed her with its wings and made her start. Then a long howl was heard through the mountain.

"Hou! hou!"

She remembered the wolf. All day long she had not once thought of him in her mad joy. At the same moment a horn sounded in the valley. It was Mr. Seguin making a last appeal.

"Hou! hou!" howled the wolf.

"Come home! come home!" cried the trumpet.

For an instant Blanquette thought of returning. Then the stake, the rope, and the hedge rose up before her; she thought she could never again endure such a life, and she concluded that she would better remain.

The horn ceased to blow.

The goat heard behind her a rustling of leaves. She turned, and saw in the shadow two great shining eyes. It was the wolf.

Immense, motionless, seated on his hind quarters, he stared at the little white goat, smacking his lips in advance. He was in no haste, for he knew he was



going to eat her, and as she turned and faced him, he laughed maliciously to himself, "Aha! Mr. Seguin's little goat!" And he licked his lips with his great red tongue.

Blanquette felt herself lost. For a moment, calling to mind the story of old Renaude, who fought all night and was eaten in the morning, she said to herself that she would rather be eaten at once. But she thought better of this, and struck an attitude of defence, like the brave Mr. Seguin's goat that she was. Not that she had any hope of killing the wolf, but only to see if she could hold out as long as Renaude.

The monster advanced, and the little horns opened the dance.

Ah! the brave little goat! More than ten times, I assure you, Gringoire, the wolf was forced to draw back and take breath. During these brief truces the little gourmande would hastily pluck a blade or two of her dear grass, and return to the fight with her mouth full. This lasted all night. From time to time Mr. Seguin's goat would look up at the stars dancing in the clear sky, and say to herself,

"If only I can hold out till morning!"

One by one the stars went out. Blanquette redoubled the thrusts with her horns, the wolf the assaults with his teeth. A pale light appeared on the horizon, the shrill crowing of a cock was heard from a farm-yard.



“At last!” said poor Blanquette, who had waited only for daylight to die; and she stretched herself out on the ground, her beautiful fur all stained with blood.

Then the wolf fell upon the little goat and ate her.  
Adieu, Gringoire.

This story is no invention of my own brain. If ever you come to Provence, our farmers will often tell you of “la cabro de moussu Seguin que se bat-tégué touto la niue emé lou loup e piei lou matin lou loup la mangé.” \*

You understand me, Gringoire? “And in the morning the wolf ate her.”

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\* Mr. Seguin's goat, that fought all night with the wolf, and in the morning the wolf ate her.



## THE OLD COUPLE.

A LETTER for me, Père Azan?

"Yes, sir; a letter from Paris."

He was very proud, good old Azan, of this letter coming from Paris. Not so was I. Something told me that this Parisian, dropping in on me unexpectedly at this early hour, was going to make me lose my whole day. I was not mistaken, as will be seen.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will do me a favor, will you not? You will close your mill and go without delay to Eyguières. Eyguières is a large village three or four leagues from your mill—just a good walk. When you arrive there you will inquire for the convent of the Orphelines; the next house to it is a low building with gray shutters and a garden in the rear. You will enter without knocking—it always stands open—and call out, 'Good-day to you; I am Maurice's friend.' Then you will see two little old people—very, very old—archaic—who will hold out their arms to you from their arm-chairs, and you will embrace them for me as if they were your own. You will talk to them, and they will talk to you



about me, and will say a thousand foolish things which you will listen to without a smile, will you not? You will not laugh, will you? They are my grand-parents; I am all they have in the world, and they have not seen me for ten years. What would you have? Paris keeps me from them, and old age keeps them from me. If they were to try to visit me they would break their necks. Fortunately you are there, my dear miller, and in embracing you these poor dears will fancy it is I. I have often spoken to them of our friendship—”

The deuce take our friendship! It was a delicious morning, but not a favorable one for perambulating the country; there was too much mistral, too much sun, it was a real Provençal day. When this accursed letter arrived I had chosen my *cagnard*\* between two rocks where I purposed remaining all day, drinking sunlight and listening to my pines sing. But there was no help for it, so I locked the door, put the key in the cat hole, took my stick and pipe, and set off.

I reached Eyguières about two o'clock. The town was deserted; the inhabitants were all in the country. The cicadas were singing in full chorus in the dust-covered elms of the public walk, an ass was sun-

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\* Shelter.



ning itself in the square of the town-hall, and a flight of pigeons at the fountain before the church, but I saw no one of whom I might inquire for the Orphanage. Fortunately an old fairy suddenly appeared before me, squatting in her door-way with her spinning-wheel. I told her what I wanted, and as she was an all-powerful fairy she had only to raise her distaff and the convent of the Orphelines stood before me. It was a large, gloomy-looking building, very proud of showing an old red sandstone cross with a few Latin words around it, over its ogive gate. Next to it I saw another smaller house, with gray shutters and a garden in the rear. Recognizing it at once I entered.

Never while I live shall I forget the long, quiet, cool corridor, the rose-colored walls, the garden that twinkled in the rear through thin blinds, the baskets of flowers, and the faded violins. Through an open door at one end of the corridor I heard the loud ticking of a clock, and a child's voice, reading, and pausing at each syllable: "Then—Saint—I-rénée—cried—I—am—the—cheese—of—the—Lord—I—must—be—de-voured—by—the—teeth—of—these—an-i-mals." I walked softly to the door and looked in.

In the still subdued light of a small chamber a little old man with red cheek-bones and wrinkled to his finger tips was asleep in an arm-chair with his



mouth open, and his hands resting on his knees, and at his feet sat a little girl in blue, a large pelerine and little bequine cap, the uniform of the Orphelines, reading the life of Saint Irénée out of a book bigger than herself. The reading of this book of miracles had wrought its effect on the whole house. The old man had fallen asleep in his chair, the flies on the ceiling, the canaries in their cage on the window. The big clock snored tic-tac, tic-tac; nothing was awake in the room but a single line of light, which fell straight and white between the closed shutters full of living sparkles and microscopic waltzes. In the midst of the general somnolence the child continued in a grave voice: "Im-me-di-ate-ly—two—lions—fell—up—on—him—and—ate—him." At this moment I entered.

The sudden appearance in person of Saint Irénée's lions could not have occasioned greater stupefaction. It was a veritable *coup de théâtre*. The little girl cried out and let fall the big book, the canaries and flies woke up, the clock struck, the old man started to his feet, whilst I, a trifle agitated, stopped half way, and said, "Good-morning, sir; I am Maurice's friend."

You should have seen him then, poor old man. You should have seen him come towards me with outstretched hands, take my hands and press them, and then walk up and down the room in agitation.



*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* every wrinkle in his face was a smile. He grew red, and stammered, "Ah! sir—ah! sir—" and then going to the other end of the room called, "Mamette!"

There was the sound of a door opening and a little mouse patter along the corridor, and Mamette appeared. There was nothing pretty, certainly, in the old woman with her egg-shaped cap, Carmelite gown, and the embroidered kerchief which she held in her hand after the ancient fashion, in honor of me. It was touching to see how the two resembled each other. With her cap on he could have answered himself to the name of Mamette, only the real Mamette must have shed many a tear in the course of her life, and was even more wrinkled than the other. Like the other, also, she had with her one of the children of the Orphanage, a little nurse in a blue pelerine who never quitted her side, and there could not be a more touching sight than that of these two old people guarded by these children.

When Mamette entered the room she began by making me a low courtesy, but with a word the old man cut her bow in half. "This is Maurice's friend." At this she trembled and wept, dropped her handkerchief, and grew red in the face, even redder than he. These old people had only a drop of blood in their veins, and the least emotion sent it rushing to their cheeks. "Quick! quick! a chair!" said the



old woman to her little orphan. "Open the shutters!" cried the old man to his. And each taking one of my hands they led me in a little trot to the window to take a good look at me. Then their arm-chairs were drawn up, and I seated myself on a camp-stool; the little blues stationed themselves behind us and the interrogation began.

"How is he? What is he doing? Why doesn't he come to see us? Is he in good spirits?" and so forth, and so on, for hours.

I answered all their questions to the best of my ability, giving such details as I knew respecting my friend, inventing without scruple what I did not know, careful not to admit that I had never observed whether his windows fastened securely, nor the color of his wall-paper.

"It is blue, madam, light blue with flowers over it."

"Really!" said the old woman, much affected, and turning to her husband, added,

"What a good child he is!"

"Oh yes, a good child," repeated the other, with enthusiasm. And all the while I was talking, there were little noddings of their heads, knowing little laughs, or the old man would draw closer to me and say, "Speak louder; she is a little deaf;" then from her side, "A little louder, if you please; he doesn't hear very well." I would raise my voice, and both



would thank me with a smile; and in these faded smiles, which leaned towards me, searching in the depths of my eyes for the image of their Maurice, I was moved to discover that image myself, vague, shadowy, undefinable, as if I saw my friend smile to me from afar through a mist.

Suddenly the old man raised himself in his chair.

"Now I think of it, Mamette, perhaps he has not breakfasted."

Mamette threw up her hands in dismay. "Not breakfasted! Great heavens!"

I thought the question was still one of Maurice, and was about to assure them that this good child never sat down to table later than twelve. But no, it was of myself they were speaking this time, and you should have seen the commotion when I confessed that I had not yet eaten anything.

"Set the table quick, little blues, in the middle of the room—the best cloth and the flowered napkins. And don't laugh so, if you please, but make haste."

And they did make haste. In less time than needed for the breaking of three plates the breakfast was served.

"A nice little breakfast," said Mamette, as she conducted me to the table, "only you will have to eat alone; we have already breakfasted."

Mamette's "nice little breakfast" consisted of a



few drops of milk, some dates, and a *barquette*\*—enough to feed her and her canaries for at least a week. And to think that I should at once and without any assistance have consumed all this vast store of provision! The little blues whispered together and nudged each other's elbows, and the very canaries in their cage seemed to be chirping, "Only look at that monsieur! he is eating the whole *barquette*!"

I did eat it all, in truth, and almost unconscious that I did so, absorbed as I was in looking round on the bright, quiet little room about which floated, as it were, a perfume of ancient things. In particular, there were two little beds off which I could not take my eyes. They were scarcely more than two cradles, and I pictured them to myself in the early morning while still shrouded with their fringed curtains. The clock strikes three, the hour when the pair are accustomed to awake.

"Are you asleep, Mamette?"

"No, dear."

"Isn't Maurice a good child?"

"Oh yes, an excellent child."

Then I heard, in imagination, the prolonged conversation that would ensue, all conjured up by the sight of these two little beds standing side by side.

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\* A kind of cake.



Meanwhile a terrible tragedy was enacting in front of the closet at the other end of the room. They wanted to get at a jar of brandy cherries which had been on the top shelf for ten years awaiting the visit of Maurice, and which they had decided to open for me. The old man had insisted on getting them down himself, and had climbed upon a chair, in spite of the timid remonstrances of his wife. Picture the scene for yourself—the old man tremblingly reaching up, the little blues holding to his chair, Mamette standing behind with outstretched arms, panting with terror, and a faint scent of bergamot wafted over them all from the open closet and piles of linen. It was charming.

At last, after much ado, they succeeded in reaching the famous jar, and with it a silver cup which Maurice had used when a child. They filled it to the brim with cherries—Maurice was so fond of these cherries!—and as they handed it to me the old man said in my ear, “My wife made them; you will have a taste of something nice.”

Alas! his wife *had* made them, and she had forgotten the sugar!—one grows forgetful as one grows old. Poor Mamette’s cherries were atrocious, but I swallowed the last one, and that without wincing.

The repast ended, I rose to bid adieu to my hosts. They would fain have detained me to talk a little longer about the dear child; but it was late, I was a



long way from my mill, and was forced to take my leave of them.

As I rose, the old man did so also. "My coat, Mamette; I will accompany him to the square." I felt sure that at heart Mamette thought it had grown too cool for him to accompany me, but she was too polite to let it appear. Only while assisting him to put his arms into his coat-sleeves—a fine Spanish smoking-coat with mother-of-pearl buttons—I heard the dear creature say in an undertone, "You will not stay late, will you?" and he answered, mischievously, "I don't know—perhaps." Then they looked at each other and laughed, and the little blues laughed to see them laugh, and the canaries in their cage laughed too in their way. Between ourselves, I believe the odor of the cherries had a trifle intoxicated them all.

Night was falling as the grandfather and I quitted the house. His little blue followed at a distance to bring him back, but he did not see her, and was very proud of walking at my side like a man. Mamette, radiant, watched us from the door-step, saying to herself, with pretty little nods,

"My old man is just the same as ever."



## THE REVEREND FATHER GAUCHER'S ELIXIR.

“DRINK this, neighbor; you will tell me news.”

And drop by drop, with the scrupulous care of a lapidary counting his pearls, the Curé of Graveson poured out for me a little of a green, golden, warm, sparkling, exquisite liquid. It made my stomach all sunshine.

“This is Father Gaucher’s elixir, the joy and health of our Provence,” said the good man, with an air of triumph. “It is manufactured at the Monastery of the Prémontrés, two leagues from your mill. Is it not worth all the Chartreuse in the world? And if you knew the history of this elixir! Listen, while I tell it you.”

Then very simply, without any intent of malice on his part, the abbé began for me in the vicarage dining-room, so pure and calm, with its little pictures of the “Stations of the Cross,” and the pretty light curtains starched like surplices, the following narrative, a trifle irreverent, it must be owned, somewhat in the style of Erasmus or D’Assoucy:

Twenty years ago the Prémontrés, or, rather, the



White Fathers, as our Provençals call them, had sunk into a condition of such abject poverty that it would have gone to your heart could you have seen their house at that time. The great wall and the Pacôme tower were crumbling to pieces; all around the cloister the place was overgrown with weeds; the colonettes were cracking; the stone saints tottering in their niches; the wind from the Rhone whistled through the chapels, blowing out the candles, breaking the lead of the windows, and dashing the holy water out of the fonts. But saddest of all, the bell-tower was silent as a deserted pigeon-house; they had no money to buy a bell, and the fathers had to ring for matins with snappers of almond-wood.

Poor White Fathers! I see them yet in the procession of the Fête-Dieu, walking dejectedly along in their patched capes, pale and cadaverous (their only food was lemons and watermelons), monseigneur the abbé bringing up the rear with bowed head, ashamed to hold up to the light the worn gilding of his cross and his moth-eaten white woollen mitre; the women belonging to the sisterhood weeping for pity, while the banner-bearers whispered one to the other, "A flock of lean starlings!" In fact it had come at last to this, that the unfortunate White Fathers were debating among themselves whether they would not do better to disperse and seek each a separate pasture.



On a certain day, while this grave question was being discussed in the chapter, it was announced that Brother Gaucher requested to be heard in the council. This Brother Gaucher, I must explain, was the neat-herd of the monastery—that is to say, he passed his time moving from gallery to gallery with two emaciated cows in search of the grass growing between the bricks. Brought up by an old woman of Beaux, and received into the monastery at the age of twelve years, he had had little opportunity to acquire any other learning than how to drive his cows and recite his Paternoster; and this last he did in Provençal, for he had as keen a head and sharp a wit as a leaden dagger. A zealous Christian withal, albeit a trifle visionary, at home in his hair-cloth, and administering discipline to himself with a robust conviction and good arms.

When they saw him enter the hall of the chapter, simple and uncouth, dropping his knees to salute the assembly, they all — prior, canons, and treasurer — began to laugh. He was accustomed to produce this effect, with his simpleton face, staring eyes, and goatee, therefore he was not disconcerted.

“Your reverences,” he said, with his accustomed *bonhomie*, twisting his olive-nut rosary in his fingers, “it is a true saying that empty casks make the best music. By dint of digging into my hollow cranium I have found the way out of our troubles.



“You recollect Aunt Bégon, the good woman that brought me up—God rest her soul! she would sing queer songs when she had been drinking—well, reverend fathers, Aunt Bégon knew all the herbs in these mountains better than an old Corsican black-bird, and in the latter part of her life learned to make a wonderful elixir by mixing five or six simples which we would gather together in the mountains. That was a long while ago; but I believe, with the help of Saint Augustine and the permission of our good father abbé, I shall be able to recall the ingredients of this wonderful elixir. We should then simply have to bottle and sell it for our community to grow rich like our brothers of La Trappe and La Grande—”

He was not allowed to finish. The prior sprang up and clasped him in his arms; the canons pressed his hands; the treasurer, even more deeply moved than the rest, kissed with reverence the torn fringe of his cucule. Then all returned to their seats to deliberate, and before the meeting adjourned it was resolved by the chapter that the charge of the cows should be transferred to Brother Thrasybule, in order to permit Brother Gaucher to devote his whole time to the concocting of the elixir.

How the good brother succeeded at last in recovering Aunt Bégon's recipe—at the price of what labors and vigils—the chronicle does not record.



What is certain is, that at the end of six months the elixir of the White Fathers had already won a considerable reputation. Through all the neighboring country of Arles there was not a farm-house but had stored away among the bottles of old wine and jars of olives a little clay flask sealed with the arms of Provence, with the trade-mark of a monk in ecstasy upon a silver label. Thanks to the popularity of this elixir, the Prémontrés grew rapidly rich. The Pacôme tower was rebuilt, the prior had a new mitre, the church windows handsome new glasses, and one fine Easter day a whole company of bells began caroling with all their might.

As for Brother Gaucher—the poor lay brother whose clownishness had furnished subject of merriment for all the chapter—there was now no such person. There was the Reverend Father Gaucher, a man of great parts and learning, who lived withdrawn from the trivial occupations of the cloister, shut up in his distillery, while thirty monks scoured the mountains for the sweet-scented herbs. This distillery, which not even the prior had the right to enter, was an old abandoned chapel at the end of the canon's garden. The good fathers, in their simplicity, had invested the place with a strange and terrible mystery, and if perchance some over-bold and curious monk ventured so far as the door, he quickly drew back, terrified at the sight of Father



Gaucher, with his wizard-like beard, bending over his furnaces with his hydrometer, and the red sand-stone retorts, the gigantic alembics, the crystal serpentine stones, and all the numberless weird things that flamed up necromantically in the red light from the stained windows.

At sunset, when the last Angelus sounded, the door of this mysterious place would open softly, and the reverend father would wend his way to church for the evening office. What a reception he had in passing through the monastery! The brothers stood aside in rows to make way for him to pass, whispering together, "Hush-sh—he has the secret!" The treasurer followed, and conversed with him, his head bowed humbly. And in the midst of all this adulation, the father, with his broad-brimmed tricorner set back on his head like an aureola, as he wiped the drops from his brow, would look around with complaisance on the spacious courts planted with oranges; the blue roofs, with their new weather-cocks; the monastery, sparkling white between elegant carved colonettes; and the monks, in their new vestments, defiling tranquilly along two by two.

"It is to me they owe all this," said the reverend father to himself; and whenever the thought entered his mind his bosom swelled with pride.

You shall see how the poor man was punished.



One evening he arrived during the office, red and panting, his cowl all awry, and so confused that he dipped his sleeves in the holy water up to the elbows. At first it was thought his agitation was caused by his being late; but when they saw him bow low to the organ instead of the high altar, cross the church like a gust of wind and wander about the choir for five minutes unable to find his seat, and, when seated, bow to right and left in a beatified manner, a murmur of astonishment ran through the three naves. "What is the matter with Father Gaucher?" "What is the matter with Father Gaucher?" was whispered from breviary to breviary. Twice the prior, impatient, let fall his cross on the flagging to command silence. The chanting still went on in the choir, but the responses were faint.

Suddenly, in the midst of the *Ave Verum*, Father Gaucher turned completely around in his seat and intoned, in a thundering voice,

"There was a White Father in Paris. Patatan, patatan, taraban, taraban," etc.

The consternation was universal. Every one rose. "Carry him out! he is possessed!" The monks crossed themselves; monseigneur's cross fairly ran mad. But Father Gaucher saw and heard nothing, till at last two able bodied monks were compelled to drag him out by the little door of the choir, writhing like one possessed of a devil, and continu-



ing his "Patatan, patatan, taraban, taraban," at the top of his lungs.

The next morning at daybreak the poor man was on his knees in the prior's oratory making his confession with a river of tears. "It was the elixir, monseigneur, the elixir surprised me," he said, beating his breast. And seeing the poor man so grieved and penitent, the good prior was deeply moved.

"Come, come, Father Gaucher, calm yourself. All this will pass away like dew in the sunshine. The song, it is true, was rather—ahem! it is to be hoped the novices didn't hear it. Tell us exactly how it happened. It was testing the elixir, was it not? Like Schwartz, the inventor of gunpowder, you are the victim of your invention. And listen, friend, is it absolutely indispensable that you should try this terrible elixir yourself?"

"Unfortunately, yes, monseigneur, the gauge gives me the strength and quantity of the alcohol, but for the finish, the flavor, I can trust only my tongue."

"Ah! very well; but when you are compelled to taste the elixir do you find it good? does it give you pleasure?"

"Alas! yes, monseigneur," said the poor father, growing very red; "for two evenings I have discovered in it a relish, an aroma—surely the devil himself must have played me this trick. But I am re-



solved hereafter to use only the gauge, so much the worse if the liquor is less exquisite—”

“No, no, that is not to be thought of,” interrupted the prior; “we must run no risk of displeasing our customers. Now that you are forewarned, all you want is to be on your guard. Let us see—how much do you require in making your tests? Fifteen drops? twenty?—say twenty drops; the devil will be very sharp indeed if he catches you with twenty drops. Moreover, to provide against accident, you are henceforth dispensed from attending church; you will say the evening office in the distillery. And now go in peace, and remember to count carefully your drops.”

But alas! it was to no purpose that the poor father counted his drops. The devil had him and would not let him go.

Strange offices were they that the distillery heard!

During the day all went well. The father, calm and collected, prepared his chafing-dishes and alembics, sorted carefully his herbs—all Provençal herbs, fine gray, dentated, penetrated with perfume and sunshine. But in the evening, when the simples were infused and the elixir cooling in the large copper basins—then it was that the poor man’s torments began.

The drops fell from the tube into the ruddy goblet—seventeen—eighteen—nineteen—twenty. These twenty drops the father swallowed at a draught, and experienced little or no pleasure in them; it was



only the twenty-first that excited his craving. Oh! that twenty-first drop! Flying from the temptation he rushed to the farthest end of the laboratory, fell on his knees, and plunged into his Paternosters. But from the still steaming liquor arose a vapor charged with aromatics that came over and hovered about him, and, in spite of himself, drew him back to the basins. Bending with dilated nostrils over the beautiful golden-green liquid, the father touched it gently with his tube, and in the little sparkling spangles of the emerald stream fancied he saw Aunt Bégon's eyes laughing and glittering at him.

"Come! just one more drop!" And drop by drop the poor man ended by filling his goblet to the brim, and then, quite faint, sank into an arm-chair and sipped his sin, repeating to himself with delicious remorse, "Ah! I am damning myself—damning myself!" The most dreadful of all was that at the bottom of this diabolical elixir, by some strange sorcery, he found all Aunt Bégon's abominable old songs, "Three Little Gadabouts holding a Feast," or "Maître André's Shepherdess goes to the Woods," and always the famous White Fathers, and the refrain, "Patatan, patatan, taraban, taraban," etc.

Fancy his confusion when, from the neighboring cells, they came to him next morning, and said, maliciously,

"He! he! Father Gaucher, the cicadas must have



got into your head when you went to bed last night."

Then followed tears and despair, and fasting and hair-cloth and penance; but they had no power against the demon of the elixir, and evening after evening, at the same hour, the devil had him again.

Meanwhile benedictions showered themselves upon the abbey in the form of orders. They came from Nîmes, Aix, Avignon, and Marseilles. Every day the monastery assumed more and more the appearance of a manufactory. There were the brothers for packing, brothers for docketing, brothers for sorting, and brothers for carting. There was less ringing of bells, but the country people around lost nothing, you may rest assured.

But one Sunday morning while the treasurer was reading in a full meeting of the chapter his report for the end of the year, and the good canons were listening to him with glistening eyes and a smile on their lips, Father Gaucher suddenly rushed into the midst of the conference.

"It is all over; I can do no more. Give me back my cows."

"What is the matter, Father Gaucher?" asked the prior, with a secret misgiving of what the matter was.

"The matter, monseigneur? The matter is that I am preparing for myself an eternity of flames and



pitchforks. The matter is that I drink and drink like any wretch—”

“But I told you to count your drops.”

“Ah, yes! count my drops, but it is by goblets I count now. Yes, reverend father, I have come to this—three bottles an evening. You understand that this cannot go on. Have the elixir made by whom you will, may the fire of hell take me if I meddle with it again!”

There was no smiling in the chapter now.

“But, unfortunate man, you would ruin us!” exclaimed the treasurer, shaking his great book.

“Would you sooner have me damn myself?”

Then the prior rose.

“Reverend brothers,” he said, extending his white hand on which the pastoral ring glistened, “all this can be arranged. It is in the evening, is it not, my son, that the devil tempts you?”

“Yes, monseigneur prior, regularly every evening. When night draws on I begin to feel—saving your presence—like Capitou’s ass at sight of the pack-saddle.”

“Well, re-assure yourself. Henceforth every evening at the office we will say on your behalf the orison of Saint Augustine, to which plenary indulgence is attached. It will be absolution in the midst of the sin.”

“Thank you! oh, thank you, monseigneur prior.”



And Father Gaucher returned to his alembics as light as a lark.

And, in fact, from this day the officiating priest never failed to add, every evening, at the close of the office, "Let us pray for our poor brother Gaucher, who imperils his soul in the interests of the order. *Oremus Domine—*"

And while all the white cowls were prostrating themselves in the shadows of the naves, and the orison floated over them like a gentle northerly breeze over the snow, at the other end of the monastery, behind the flaming windows of the distillery, Father Gaucher's voice could have been heard singing,

"In Paris there was a White Father,  
Patatan, patatan, taraban, taraban;  
In Paris there was a White Father  
Who made the little nuns dance,  
Tran tran tran, tran tran tran in a garden,  
Who made the little nuns—"

Here the good father stopped short in terror.  
"Mercy! what if my parishioners should hear me!"



## THE WOMAN OF ARLES.

IN going from my mill to the village you pass by a farm-house which stands near the road-side, in the middle of a large yard planted with nettle-trees. It is a true type of the Provençal farm-house, with its red tilings, broad façade, irregular windows, granary surmounted with a weather-cock, mill-wheel, and the tufts of hay peeping out.

What was there about this house that so impressed me? why did its ever closed door affect me so painfully? An oppressive silence seemed to reign there. The dogs never barked as you passed, the guinea-fowls scampered off without uttering a cry. Not a voice was heard from within, not the tinkle of a mule-bell in the yard. But for the white curtains at the windows, and the smoke rising from the roof, one would have supposed the place uninhabited.

Returning from the village one day, I kept close in the shadow of the wall, to shelter myself from the sun's burning heat. Some men were silently filling a wagon with hay in front of the farm-yard. The gate was standing open, and I saw at the other end



of the yard a gray-haired old man (with his vest too short and clothes all in tatters) seated at a large stone table, his head buried in his hands. I stopped. One of the men said to me, in an undertone, "Hush-sh—there is the master. He has been like that ever since his son's misfortune."

At the same moment a woman, accompanied by a little boy dressed in black, passed us, with large gilt missals in their hands, and entered the gate.

"That is the mistress, returning with Cadet from mass. They go every day since the lad killed himself. The father always wears his dead boy's clothes, and can't be prevailed on to leave them off. Dia hue ! beast !"

The wagon staggered, beginning to move off. Wishing to hear more, I requested the driver's permission to mount; and it was there, seated in the wagon on the hay, that I listened to the following heart-rending tale:

His name was Jan. He was an excellent young fellow of twenty, modest, and good as a girl, with a frank, open face, handsome, too, and a favorite with the women, though he never seemed to care for but one, and she was a little woman of Arles, dressed in velvet and lace, whom he met there one day in the tilt-yard. His parents were not very well pleased with the affair—the girl was said to be a coquette,



and her people were strangers. But Jan's heart was set on his Arlésienne, and at last they gave way, and the marriage was to take place after harvest.

One Sunday the family were just finishing dinner in the yard; it had been almost a wedding-feast; the girl was not present, but they had been drinking her health all the time. A man appeared in the gate, and in a trembling voice asked permission to speak to M. Estève alone. Estève rose and went to him.

"Sir," said the man, "you are about to marry your son to a wench who has been my mistress for two years. Here are letters which will prove that what I say is true. Her parents know it, and had promised her to me; but since your son has been paying court to her they have shaken me off; but I suppose after this she can hardly be another man's wife."

"Very well," said M. Estève, after looking at the letters. "Come in and take a glass of muscat with us."

"No, thank you. I am more sad than thirsty." And the man departed.

The father returned, resumed quietly his seat at the table, and the meal ended cheerfully. That evening the father and son took a long walk together, and when they returned, M. Estève led Jan to his mother, saying,



“Comfort him, he is unhappy.”

Jan ceased to speak of the Arlésienne, though he still loved her—indeed, more than ever. But he kept it all to himself, and it was that that killed him, poor boy. Sometimes he would spend whole days moping in a corner; then he would suddenly rouse himself and do the work of ten hands. When evening came he would set out on the road to Arles, and walk till he saw the steeple of the village church against the sky; then he would return. He never went farther.

Seeing him always sad and solitary, his parents were at a loss what to do; they dreaded some catastrophe. At last, one day at table, his mother said to him, with tears in her eyes,

“Listen, Jan, if you love her in spite of all, take her.”

The father’s face crimsoned, and he dropped his eyes. Jan shook his head and left the room.

From this day a change came over him. He went to balls and races, and appeared always in good spirits. His father said to himself, “He is cured;” but his mother had misgivings, and watched him more anxiously than ever. He slept with Cadet near the silk-worm nursery, and she had her bed moved so as to be near their chamber. The silk-worms might have need of her in the night!

Saint Eloi’s day came—the farmer’s patron saint.



There was merry-making—fireworks, colored lanterns, chateaufort for all—the old wine flowed like water. Vive Saint Eloi! They danced the farandole madly, and Jan seemed cheerful and gay; he tried to induce his mother to join in the dance. The poor woman wept for joy.

They went to bed at midnight, sleepy and worn out, but Jan did not sleep. Cadet said he sobbed all night. Ah! he was badly cut up, poor lad, I warrant you!

The next day at sunrise his mother heard some one hurry through her chamber. A presentiment seized her. "Is that you, Jan?" Jan did not answer. He had already reached the stairs. His mother rose, quick—quick—and followed him up the steps. "My son, for Heaven's sake!" He shut the door behind him and locked it.

"Jan—my Janet—answer me! what are you doing?"

She felt for the latch with her old, trembling fingers. She heard the sound of a window opening, and of something heavy falling on the stones, and that was all.

It was all over, poor boy. "I love her too much; I am going—" Ah! miserable hearts of ours, strange it is that contempt cannot conquer love!

That morning the village people wondered who



it was they heard sobbing so in M. Estève's yard as they passed.

It was the mother, who, all undressed, sat by a stone table wet with dew and blood, and wept as she pressed her dead boy in her arms.



## BALLADS IN PROSE.

WHEN I opened my door this morning, I found a large carpet of ice spread all around my mill. The grass sparkled and snapped like so much glass, the whole hill shivered; for a day my dear Provence put on the mask of a northern country. And it was in the midst of pine-trees fringed with hoar-frost, and tufts of lavender bloomed out into crystal bouquets, that I wrote these two ballads, a trifle German in conceit, with the frost sending white sparkles about me, and above me in the clear atmosphere three triangular masses of storks descending towards Camargue from the country of Heinrich Heine, and screaming as they flew, "It is cold—cold—cold!"

### I.—THE DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN.

The little Dauphin is ill — the Dauphin is going to die. In all the churches the Host is elevated and tall candles burn for the recovery of the royal child. The streets of the ancient residence are sad and silent, the bells are mute, citizens peer curiously through the palace gratings, porters talk in solemn tones in the courts.



All the palace is astir. Chamberlains and majordomos hurry up and down the marble steps; the galleries are thronged with pages; courtiers in silken robes pass from group to group, asking the news in smothered accents. On the broad stairways weeping maids of honor bow low, and wipe their eyes with beautiful embroidered kerchiefs.

An assemblage of robed doctors gathers in the orangery. Through the glasses they can be seen waving their long black sleeves and inclining doctorally their perukes. Before the door walk the tutor and riding-master of the little Dauphin. They are waiting for the decisions of the faculty. The riding-master swears like a trooper, the tutor quotes Horace. From the stable comes a long, plaintive neigh. It is the little Dauphin's chestnut, who, forgotten by the grooms, calls sadly from his empty crib.

And the king—where is the king? Shut up all alone at the farther end of the palace. Kings must not be seen to weep. Not so, however, the queen. Seated by the Dauphin's side, her lovely face all bathed in tears, she sobs before us all like the veriest serving-woman.

In his lace bed lies the little Dauphin. He is whiter than the pillow upon which his head reclines. They believe that he is asleep; but no, he is not asleep. The little Dauphin turns to his mother. "Madam the queen, why do you weep? Do you be-



lieve, like the rest, that I am going to die?" The queen tries to answer; sobs choke her utterance.

"Do not weep, madame the queen. You forget that I am the Dauphin; Dauphins do not die thus." The queen sobs more piteously. The little Dauphin is frightened. "Halloo!" exclaims he, "I do not want to die! Order instantly forty stout lansquenets to keep guard around our bed. Set a hundred large guns to watch night and day before our windows. And woe to Death should he dare approach us!"

To humor the royal child the queen makes a sign. In a twinkling, cannon are heard rolling in the court; forty stout lansquenets with their partisans range themselves around the room. They are old troopers and their mustaches are gray. The Dauphin recognizes one. "Lorrain!" he cries. The old soldier draws closer. "Let me look at your big sword. If Death comes for me you will kill him, will you not?" "Yes, monseigneur." And two big tears roll down his tanned cheeks.

The priest approaches the Dauphin. He speaks long in subdued tones and holds up the crucifix. The Dauphin shows surprise. Suddenly he interrupts him. "I see what you mean, monsieur the abbé; but would not my little friend Beppo die in my place if we pay him plenty of money?" The priest continues to speak. The Dauphin looks more and more surprised. When the priest ceases, he says, with a sigh, "All



that is very sad, monsieur the abbé, but there is one comfort for me. When I get to the paradise of the stars I shall still be the Dauphin. The good God is my cousin, and will treat me according to my rank."

Then he turned to his mother, and said, "Let them bring my best clothes—the ermine doublet and velvet pumps. I want to make myself smart for the angels, and enter paradise dressed like the Dauphin." Again the priest bends over the Dauphin, and speaks to him in low tones. In the midst of the discourse the royal child interrupts him angrily: "What! it is nothing, then, to be a Dauphin, after all!" and refusing to hear more, he turns his head to the wall and weeps bitterly.

## II.—THE SUB-PREFECT IN THE COUNTRY.

The sub-prefect is making his rounds. Coachman before and postilions behind, the calash of the sub-prefect is bearing him majestically to the district meeting in the Valley-of-the-Fays. He has donned upon this special day his embroidered coat, dress hat, trousers with silver bands, and full-dress, pearl-handled sword. On his cap is a large embossed shagreen case at which he gazes gloomily.

The sub-prefect gazes gloomily at his large shagreen case. He thinks of the discourse presently to be delivered before the inhabitants of the Valley-of-the-Fays. "Dear friends and citizens—" But he



twirls in vain the silken ends of his light whiskers, and repeats twenty times in vain, "Dear friends and citizens—" The rest of the discourse will not come.

The rest of the discourse will not come. It is so warm in this calash! Far as the eye can reach, the road to the Valley-of-the-Fays is turning to dust in the noonday sun. On the elms by the way-side, white with dust, millions of cicadas are conversing from tree to tree. Suddenly the sub-prefect starts. The little oak wood at the foot of the hillock has beckoned to him.

The little oak wood has beckoned to him: "Monsieur the sub-prefect, come this way to compose your discourse; you will be better here beneath my branches." The sub-prefect is seduced. He leaps from his calash, he says to his attendants that he is going to compose his discourse in the little oak wood.

In the little oak wood there are birds and violets, and rills are running through the fine grass. At sight of the sub-prefect, with his beautiful trousers and embossed shagreen case, the birds, affrighted, cease to sing, the brooks keep silence, the violets hide their heads. To this little world a sub-prefect is a strange sight, and in low tones they ask each other who this fine lord can be in silver trousers.

In a low voice, hidden under the foliage, they



ask who this fine lord can be in silver trousers. The sub-prefect, enchanted with the silence and with the freshness of the wood, places his dress hat on the ground, and seats himself on the moss at the foot of a young oak. Then he lays open the shagreen case, and takes from it a large sheet of official paper. "An artist!" exclaims the wren. "No," says the bullfinch, "he is not an artist. See his silver trousers; he must be a prince."

"He must be a prince," says the bullfinch. "Neither artist nor prince," says an old nightingale who has sung in the garden of the prefecture. "I know him; he is a sub-prefect." And the little wood all whispers, "He is a sub-prefect; he is a sub-prefect." "How bald he is," remarks a large tufted little lark. "Is he wicked?" ask the violets. "Oh! not at all!" answers the old nightingale. And with this assurance the birds begin to sing, and the brooks to run, the violets give out their perfume, all as if the sub-prefect had not been there. Unmoved by the pretty hubbub, the sub-prefect invokes the muse of agricultural meetings. With his pencil upraised, in his most rhetorical voice he begins, "Dear friends and citizens—"

"Dear friends and citizens," says the sub-prefect, in his most rhetorical voice. A burst of laughter interrupts him. He looks around, but he sees only a large woodpecker perched on the top of his dress



hat, looking at him and laughing. The sub-prefect shrugs his shoulders and is on the eve of resuming his discourse; but the woodpecker interrupts him again, crying out from a little distance, "What good is that? what good is that?" "What! what good?" says the sub-prefect, turning quite red. Then frightening off the audacious creature, he resumes more vehemently: "Dear friends and citizens—"

"Dear friends and citizens," resumes the sub-prefect more vehemently. But now all the little violets stretch themselves up on their stems, and say, softly, "How do you like our perfume? Is it not sweet?" and the brooks running in the moss make divine music for him; in the branches over his head flocks of wrens come to warble their prettiest songs; and all the little wood conspires together to hinder him from composing his discourse.

All the little wood conspires to hinder him from composing his discourse. Intoxicated with perfume and music, the sub-prefect struggles in vain against this new power that is enthralling him. He leans his elbow in the grass, unbuttons his fine coat, stammers twice or thrice, "Dear friends and citizens— Dear friends and cit— Dear friends and—" Then he sends the citizens to the devil, and nothing is left to the muse of agricultural meetings but to hide her face.

Hide your face, O muse of agricultural meetings.



When, an hour after, the employés of the sub-prefecture come to the woods in search of their patron, the sight they saw filled them with horror. Flat on his face, with clothes disordered as those of any tramp, munching violets the while, the sub-prefect was composing poetry.



## THE CURÉ OF CUCUGNAN.

EVERY year at Candlemas the Provençal poets publish in Avignon a merry little book, full to the binding with beautiful verses and pretty tales. The one of this year has just reached me, and I find in it a charming fabliau which I will try to translate for you, abridging it a trifle. Parisians, hold your hampers! It is the finest of Provençal flour that I am going to serve to you this time.

The Abbé Martin was Curé of Cucugnan. He had a paternal affection for his people, and had they only given him more satisfaction, Cucugnan would have been to him a very paradise upon earth. But alas! his confessional was covered with cobwebs and dust, and when the beautiful Easter day came round the Host remained in the bottom of the holy pyx. This grieved the good priest to the heart, and he was continually beseeching Heaven to permit him to see his flock led back to the fold before he died. You shall see whether his prayer was granted.

One day, after the reading of the gospel, Mr. Martin ascended his pulpit.



"My brethren," said he, "I found myself the other night—I, miserable sinner that I am—at the gate of Paradise.

"I knocked. Saint Peter opened to me.

"Oh! it is you, is it, dear Mr. Martin? What fair wind blows you hither, and what can we do for you?"

"Holy Saint Peter, you who keep the great book and the key, would you tell me, if I be not too prying, how many Cucugnaners you have in Paradise?"

"I can refuse you nothing, Mr. Martin. Take a seat and we will look it up together."

"And Saint Peter took his great book, opened it, put his spectacles on his nose.

"Let us see: Cucugnan, Cu — Cu — Cucugnan; here we are. Why, my dear Mr. Martin, the page is a blank! There are no more Cucugnaners here than there are fish-bones in a turkey."

"What! *No one* from Cucugnan here? Not a soul? It is impossible! Look again."

"Not one, holy man. Look for yourself if you think I am jesting."

"I stamped my feet, and clasping my hands, cried out, 'Mercy! mercy!'

"Believe me, Mr. Martin, it is useless to turn your heart inside out in that manner. You might have a stroke of apoplexy. After all, it is not your fault.



Perhaps your Cucugnanners are serving out their little time in Purgatory.'

"'Oh! for pity's sake, great Saint Peter, let me at least see and comfort them.'

"'Willingly, my friend. Here, put on these sandals, for the roads are bad. There, now you are all right. Take the path which you see straight before you. At the turn at the end yonder there is a silver gate set with little black crosses. *Addessias!* keep up a stout heart!'

"I walked and walked — what a walk it was! The bare thought of it makes me shudder! By a path lined with briars, carbuncles, and shining, hissing snakes, I reached the silver gate.

"Tap! tap!

"'Who is there?' asked a hoarse funereal voice.

"'The Curé of Cucugnan.'

"'Of—'

"'Of Cucugnan.'

"'Ah! Come in.'

"I entered. A tall, handsome angel, with wings black as night, and a robe resplendent as the day, and with a diamond key suspended to his girdle, was writing—cra—cra—cra—in a great book, larger than Saint Peter's.

"'Beautiful angel of God, I wish to know—I am over curious, perhaps—whether you have here any Cucugnanners.'



“ ‘Any—’

“ ‘Cucugnaners; any people from Cucugnan; I am their prior.’

“ ‘Ah! The Abbé Martin?’

“ ‘At your service, Mr. Angel.’

“ ‘Cucugnan, you say?’ And the angel opened and turned the leaves of his great book, wetting his fingers to turn them more easily.

“ ‘Cucugnan,’ he said, with a sigh. ‘Mr. Martin, we have not a Cucugnaner in Purgatory.’

“ ‘Jesu! Mary! Joseph! not a soul from Cucugnan in Purgatory! Oh! great God! where then can they be?’

“ ‘Why, holy man, in Paradise; where else could you suppose?’

“ ‘But I have just come from Paradise.’

“ ‘You have just come from Paradise! Well?’

“ ‘And they are not there. Oh! holy mother of the angels!’

“ ‘Then, Mr. Martin, since they are neither in Paradise nor Purgatory, as there is no middle place, they must be—’

“ ‘Holy cross! Son of David! Is it possible? Could great Saint Peter have lied to me? I didn’t hear the cock crow. Ah! my poor people! How shall I go to Paradise if my Cucugnaners are not there?’

“ ‘Listen, my poor Mr. Martin. If you must know



the truth for yourself at any price, take that path, run, if you know how; to your left you will see a large gate. There you can find out everything. The Lord be with you.'

"And the angel closed the gate.

"It was a long road, paved with red embers. I staggered like a drunken man, and stumbled at every step. The drops oozed from every pore in my body and I panted for thirst; but thanks to the sandals Saint Peter had lent me, my feet were not burned.

"When I had staggered on for some distance, I saw on my left a gate—no, a gateway, yawning like the mouth of a vast furnace. Oh! my children, what a sight! There they ask no one his name, there they keep no register. You may enter in batches, as freely as you enter your tavern on Sundays.

"I sweated great drops, and yet I was shivering with the cold. My hair stood on end. The air was filled with the smell of roasting flesh, like the smell we observe in Cucugnan when Eloy the farrier burns the foot of the old ass he is shoeing. I could not get my breath, in this burning, sickening atmosphere. I heard a frightful din—wrangling, groans, howls, oaths.

"'Well, are you coming in or not?' said a horned demon, sticking me with his fork.

"'I? No, not I—I am a friend of God.'



“‘Eh! what then are you here for, you scurvy wretch?’

“‘I came—oh! do not speak to me! I can scarce stand on my feet—I came—I came a long way—to ask if—if perchance—you have here—any one—from Cucugnan.’

“‘Ah! fire of judgment! you must be a fool if you do not know that all Cucugnan is here. See—look for yourself, ugly beast that you are, if you wish to know how your Cucugnaners are arranged.’

“And I saw in the midst of a terrible whirlwind of flame,

“The long-limbed Coq-Galine—you have all known him, my friends—that got drunk and tormented his Clairon.

“I saw Pascal Doigt-le-Poix, who made his oil with M. Julien’s olives.

“I saw Maître Crapassi, who oiled so well the wheels of his barrow.

“And Dauphine, who sold so dear the water of his well.

“And Tortillard, who when he met me carrying the good God went on his way proud as Lucifer, with his cap on his head and pipe in his mouth, as if he had met a dog.

“And Conlan, with his Zette and Jacques and Pierre and Toni.”

Trembling and pale, the congregation groaned, as



they saw one his father, another his mother; this one a sister, that one a brother.

"You understand, do you not, my children, that this must not go on. I am answerable for your souls, and would fain save you from the abyss into which you are plunging. There is no time to be lost. To-morrow I shall set to work, and each shall have his turn as at the Jonquières dancing-school.

"To-morrow, Monday, I shall confess the old people—that will be trifling; Tuesday the children—that will soon be over; Wednesday the boys and girls—that may be long; Thursday the men—that may be cut short; Friday the women—I shall say, no scandals; Saturday the miller—he must have a day to himself. And if by Sunday we have finished, we shall be fortunate.

"You know, my children, when the grain is ripe it must be cut; when the wine is drawn, it must be drank. We have plenty of soiled linen; it must be washed, and well washed. This is the grace I ask for you. Amen."

It was done as he said. From this memorable Sunday the perfume of the Cucugnan virtues penetrated the air for leagues around. And the good abbé, happy and light of heart, dreamed the other night that, followed by his whole flock, a resplendent procession, amid lighted candles, a cloud of incense, and choir-boys chanting the *Te Deum*, he was ascending the starry route to the City of God.



## THE LIGHT-HOUSE AT THE SANGUINAIRES.

LAST night I was unable to sleep. The mistral blew violently, and its howling kept me awake. The mutilated fan of my mill swayed and whistled in the blast like the rigging of a ship; the whole mill creaked. The tiles were flying from the roof in complete rout; the pine-trees groaned and whizzed. I could have believed myself in mid-ocean.

It recalled vividly to my mind a night which I passed three years ago at the light-house of the Sanguinaires on the coast of Corsica, at the entrance of the Gulf of Ajaccio. Here was still another quiet nook that I discovered, where I might be alone and dream.

Picture to yourself a reddish island of wild aspect; at one end of it the light-house, at the other an old Genoese tower, where in those days an eagle had made itself a home. On the water's edge the ruins of a lazaretto overgrown with weeds; ravines, jungles, massive rocks, a few wild goats, Corsican horses, with manes floating to the breeze as they gambolled, and above, far above all this, amid a whirlwind of sea-birds, the light-house, with the watch pacing to



and fro on its white platform, its green ogive door, slender cast-iron tower, and the great lantern, with its facets flaming up to the sun and giving light even by day, and you have the island of the Sanguinaires as I saw it last night as I lay awake listening to the rumbling of my pines. It was to this enchanted isle that, before I had the mill, I would go sometimes and shut myself up when I felt a need of fresh air and solitude.

What did I do there?

What I do here; less still.

When the wind was not too violent, I would find a place for myself between two rocks, on the edge of the water, in the midst of gulls, blackbirds, and swallows, and remain there nearly all day in the sort of stupor, the delicious torpor, to which the contemplation of the sea disposes. Doubtless every one is familiar with this state in which one does not think, not even dream—when one's whole personality escapes, flutters away, evaporates. You are no longer yourself, you are the gull plunging into the waters, the foam cloud floating upward to the sun between two waves, the white smoke of yonder packet-boat steaming away in the distance, the little coral boat with red sails, this pearl of water, this flake of mist—all, everything, excepting yourself. Oh! what delicious days of semi-oblivion have I passed on my island!



When the wind blew hard, the shore not being tenable, I would shut myself up in the court of the lazaretto, a melancholy little court with a scent of rosemary and wild wormwood, and then, leaning against a side of the old wall, would abandon myself to the influence of the solitude and sadness which floated with the light of day into the stone cells that opened all around me like ancient tombs. Now and then the flapping of a door would break the silence, or the light bound of a goat come to browse under shelter from the wind, and which, seeing me, would stop short, with its lively air and horns held high, and gaze at me out of infantine eyes.

At five the horn of the watch summoned me to dinner. I took a little path through the jungle rising almost perpendicularly from the sea, and wended my way slowly in the direction of the lighthouse, pausing with each step to turn again and look at the immense horizon of water and light which grew more and more vast as I ascended.

Above, it was charming. I can still see before me the handsome dining-room, with large flagging and oak panelling, and the great door opened on the terrace to the setting sun. The watchmen were waiting for me to sit down to dinner. There were three, one a native of Marseilles and two Corsicans; all three small, bearded, with the same tanned, weather-



beaten faces and goat-skin pelone,\* but the opposites of each other in character and habits. The Marseillais, active and industrious, always busied with gardening, fishing, searching for gull's eggs, or lying in ambush to milk a goat as she passed; the Corsicans, on the other hand, with no occupations outside of their regular functions, and spending their leisure hours in the kitchen playing interminable games of scopa, stopping only long enough to relight their pipes and hack a little tobacco in the hollow of their hands with their knives. All good fellows, withal, simple-hearted and very attentive to their guest, who must in truth have seemed to them a very singular monsieur to shut himself up of his own pleasure in the light-house. For them the days were long and wearisome, the only relief to their tedium being when their turn came to go on shore. When the weather was good this great happiness was theirs every month. Ten days of land to thirty of light-house was the rule, but during the stormy season no rule held good. When the wind blows, the waves rise, and the Sanguinaires are white with foam, the watch is sometimes blockaded there for three months at a time, and that under frightful circumstances.

“Let me tell you, sir, what happened to me,” said old Bartoli, one day while we were at dinner. “Here

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\* A kind of cloak with hood and sleeves.



is what happened to me five years ago at this very table, on one winter evening such as this. There were only two of us in the light-house, I and a comrade named Tchéco, the rest were on leave on land. We were just finishing our dinner when my comrade stopped eating, looked at me very strangely for a moment, and then fell over on the table, with his arms stretched out before him. I went to him, shook him, and called him by name. Tché! oh! Tché! No answer. He was dead.

“I stood there for an hour trembling before the corpse, and then suddenly it flashed into my head—the light-house! I had but just time to hurry up and light the lantern before night fell, and what a night that was, sir! The sea and wind seemed no longer to talk with their natural voices, and every moment I fancied I heard some one calling to me on the stairs. I was feverish and thirsty, but nothing would have induced me to go down, such was my horror of the dead man.

“However, when day dawned, my courage revived a little and I went down-stairs, carried my comrade to his bed, drew the covering over him, repeated a short prayer, and hurried to the alarm signal.

But the sea was too heavy. I called in vain; no one came, and I was left alone in the light-house with poor Tchéco for Heaven knows how long. I hoped to keep him till the boat arrived, but at the



end of three days it was no longer possible. What was I to do? Carry him out? Bury him? But there was too much hard rock, and the island was full of crows. It seemed a pity to abandon to them a good Christian like this. Then I thought of taking him down to one of the cells of the lazaretto. This sad work occupied a whole afternoon, and I had to summon all my courage, you may believe me! To this day, sir, when I go down on that side of the island on a windy afternoon, I seem to myself to be carrying a dead man on my shoulders."

Poor old Bartoli! The drops gathered on his brow at the bare recollection.

We finished our repast, talking at length about the light-house, the sea, shipwrecks, and Corsican banditti. Then, as day was declining, the first watch took his pipe, his gourd, a big volume of Plutarch with red edges—the whole library of the Sanguinaires—and disappeared by a back door, and a minute after we heard a noise of chains and pulleys, the winding up of the ponderous clock.

I went outside and took my seat on the terrace. The sun, already low, was rapidly descending to the water, carrying the horizon along with it. The wind blew up fresher, the island assumed a violet tint. A large bird passed slowly by me—the eagle of the Genoese tower returning home.

Gradually the mists began to ascend from the sea,



and soon nothing was visible but a white line of foam encircling the island. Suddenly, over my head there burst forth a great flood of soft light. Leaving the island in shadow, its bright ray fell broad and full over the sea, while I stood lost in the darkness under the great luminous waves that well nigh splashed me with their foam. But the wind was blowing up more briskly. It became necessary to return. Feeling my way along I reached the outer door, closed it, and made fast the iron bars; then, still groping, by a little iron staircase that shook and resounded under my tread, I reached the top of the light-house. Here, indeed, there was light!

Imagine a gigantic Carcel lamp with six rows of wicks, around which slowly revolve on a pivot the walls of the lantern, provided with an enormous crystal lens and a large stationary glass to protect the flame from the wind. When I first entered I was dazed. These coppers and tins, all these dazzling reflectors and swelling crystal walls turning with great bluish circles, this flashing and clashing of light, affected me with a sensation of vertigo.

Gradually my eyes accustomed themselves to it, however, and I seated myself at the foot of the lamp by the side of the watch, who was reading his Plutarch aloud to keep from falling asleep. Without, there was the blackness of darkness. The wind howled like a madman as it swept along the little



balcony which revolved around the glass; the light-house creaked; the sea roared; the waves dashed on the rocks at the farther end of the island like the booming of artillery. At moments an invisible finger would strike on the glass—some night-bird, drawn by the light, had broken its head on the crystal. From the sparkling, warm lantern came the sound of the crackling of the flame, the dropping of the oil, the unwinding of the chain, and a monotonous voice intoning the life of Demetrius Phalereus.

At midnight the watch rose, cast a last glance at his wicks, and we went down-stairs together. On the stairs we met his comrade of the second watch rubbing his eyes, and the gourd and Plutarch were passed to him. Before seeking our couches we went to the back room, encumbered with chains, weights, tin reservoirs, ropes; and by the light of his little lamp the watch inscribed in the large light-house book which always stood open—

Midnight. Heavy sea.

Ship out at sea. Stormy.



## THE WRECK OF THE "SÉMILLANTE."

THE mistral having carried us the other night to the Corsican coast, let me tell you a terrible story of the sea which the fishermen often talk over during their vigils, and concerning which chance furnished me with some curious details.

It was two or three years ago. I was scouring the sea of Sardinia in company with six or seven sailors belonging to the customs—a rough voyage for a novice. During the whole month of March we had not a single day of fair weather. The wind pursued us madly, and the sea never ceased its raging.

One evening when we were flying before a hurricane, our vessel took refuge in the midst of a cluster of islands at the entrance of the Strait of Bonifacio. Their aspect presented nothing inviting—great bare rocks covered with birds, here and there a tuft of wormwood, thickets of mastics, patches of woods rotting in the mud. But even these dreary rocks were better than a berth on an old half-deck vessel, which the waves had the privilege of entering at will, and we were fain to content ourselves.

When we had landed, and the sailors were light-



ing a fire to make the bouillabaisse, the patron called to me, and pointing out a little white enclosure lost in the fog at the farther end of the island—

"Will you come with me to the cemetery?" said he.

"The cemetery, Captain Leonetti? Where then are we?"

"At the Lavezzi islands, sir. It is here that the six hundred men of the *Sémillante* are buried, in the same spot where their frigate was wrecked ten years ago. Poor fellows! they have few visitors; it is the least we can do, now we are here, to give them a greeting."

"With all my heart, captain."

A sad place is the cemetery of the *Sémillante*! I can see it still, with its little low wall, its iron gate, rusty and hard to open, its silent chapel, and the hundred black crosses hidden in the grass. Not a crown of immortelles, not a souvenir—nothing. Ah! these poor abandoned dead, how cold it must have felt in their chance tombs!

We remained there a moment on our knees. The captain prayed aloud. Enormous gulls, the sole guardians of the cemetery, circled above our heads, mingling their hoarse cries with the wailing of the sea.

The prayer ended, we returned sorrowfully towards the corner of the island where our vessel was moored.



The sailors had not been idle during our absence. We found a large fire burning under shelter of a rock, and the pot smoking. We seated ourselves around it, with our feet to the flame, and soon we each had on our knees, in a red clay porringer, two slices of black bread well watered. The repast was eaten in silence. We were hungry and wet, and then the neighborhood of the cemetery was not enlivening. However, when the porringers were emptied and our pipes lighted, we began to chat a little.

“How did it happen?” I asked of the captain, who sat with his head leaning on his hands, gazing into the fire.

“How it happened,” he answered, with a sigh, “no living mortal can tell. All we know is that the *Sémillante*, loaded with troops for the Crimea, sailed from Toulon before dark, in ugly weather. In the night it grew worse; it stormed and rained, and such a heavy sea as never was. In the morning the wind abated a little, but the sea was still tossing, pitching here and there and everywhere; and with it all the devil’s own fog, you couldn’t see a lantern ten paces off. It is my opinion that the *Sémillante* must have lost her rudder in the morning, for these fogs never last, and without some damage the captain wouldn’t have run on these rocks. He was a bold sailor, whom we all knew, had commanded the station at



Corsica, and knew the coast as well as I who know nothing else."

"And at what hour is the *Sémillante* supposed to have perished?"

"It must have been noon, sir, broad noonday; but, damme! with the sea-fog noon is worth no more than night black as a wolf's jaws. A customs officer of the coast told me that on that day, about half-past eleven, having come out of his little house to fasten his shutters, his cap was carried off by a gust, and that he ran along the shore after it at the risk of being swept away by the waves. You see, these customs men are not rich, and a cap costs them dear. At a certain moment, happening to raise his head, he saw through the fog, quite near him, a large ship with bare poles, flying before the wind towards the Lavezzi islands. The vessel flew so fast that the officer had but just time to get a glimpse of her; but there is every reason to believe it was the *Sémillante*, since a half-hour later the shepherd of the islands heard— But here is the shepherd himself, sir; he will tell you his own tale. Good-day, Palombo; come and warm yourself a little; don't be afraid."

A man in a hood, whom I had remarked a moment before loitering near our fire, and whom I had supposed to be one of the crew not being aware that there was a shepherd on the island, approached tim-



idly. He was an old leper, three-fourths idiot, the victim of some scorbutic malady which had frightfully swollen and disfigured his lips. They explained to him not without difficulty the subject of our discourse, and the old man related to us how, on the day in question, about twelve o'clock, he heard in his cabin a terrible crashing noise. The island was so covered with water that he could not go out, and it was not till next day that, opening his door, he saw the shore all strewn with wrecks and bodies thrown up by the sea. Terrified, he hurried to Bonifacio in quest of men.

Fatigued with his recital, he sank into a seat, and the captain resumed :

“Yes, sir, it was this poor old man who came to notify us. He was half dead with terror, and his brain has ever since been unsettled. And indeed it is no wonder. Fancy six hundred corpses piled up on the sand pell-mell with fragments of wood and scraps of torn sail. Poor *Sémillante* ! The sea had crushed her to atoms so that out of all the wreck Palombo could hardly find material for a paling round his little hut. As for the men, they were nearly all frightfully mutilated and disfigured ; it was pitiful to see them grappled together in lumps. We found the captain in full-dress, the priest in his stole, in a corner between two rocks a little cabin-boy with his eyes wide open—one would have de-



clared that he was still alive; but no, it was decreed that not one of them all was to escape."

Here the captain paused.

"See to the fire, Nardi, it is going out."

Nardi threw on the embers two or three pieces of plank smeared with tar, which blazed up, and Leonetti resumed:

"The saddest part of the story is this: Three weeks before the disaster, a little corvette, bound, like the *Sémillante*, for the Crimea, was wrecked in the same way, almost on the same spot; only that time we succeeded in rescuing the crew and twenty train-soldiers. We took them to Bonifacio and kept them two days, and when they were well dried and on their feet again they returned to Toulon. A short time after, they set sail again for the Crimea, and on what vessel do you think, sir? On the *Sémillante*! We found them all—all the twenty—among the dead. I myself raised a handsome corporal with a blond mustache, who had stayed at my house and kept us all laughing with his anecdotes and jokes. To see him there made my heart sick. Ah, Santa Madre!"

Here the good Leonetti paused, much agitated, shook the ashes from his pipe, drew his cloak around him, and bade me good-night. The sailors talked together a while longer in smothered tones. Then one by one the pipes went out and they ceased to talk. The old shepherd took his departure, and I re-



mained alone, dreaming, in the midst of the sleeping crew.

My thoughts still full of the melancholy catastrophe, I made an attempt to reconstruct in my own mind the poor lost vessel, and the incidents of this wreck, of which the gulls were the sole witnesses. Certain details which had impressed me—the captain in full-dress, the priest in his stole, the twenty rescued train-soldiers—aided me to form a conception of the circumstances of the tragedy. I saw the frigate set sail from the port of Toulon with a high wind and boisterous sea; but the captain is a skilful, intrepid sailor, and all is ease and confidence on board.

In the morning the fog gathers. They begin to grow uneasy. The captain never quits the poop. In the underdeck, where the soldiers are confined, it is black night, the atmosphere close and sultry. A few are ill, and lying in the hammocks. The ship pitches horribly. It is impossible to stand, and they talk together squatting in groups on the floor, clinging to the benches. One of the number shows signs of uneasiness—shipwrecks are so frequent in these parts! The corporal, who is a true Parisian, always blustering, makes their flesh creep with his jests. “Shipwrecks! nothing can be more amusing! It is simply an ice bath, then a journey to Bonifacio to eat blackbirds with Captain Leonetti.”



Suddenly a cracking noise is heard. "What is the matter?" "What has happened?" "The rudder is gone," answers a sailor, soaking wet, who runs across the underdeck. "A pleasant voyage to it!" cries the hare-brained corporal. But no one laughs.

There is great confusion on deck. Not a wink can be seen for the fog. The terrified sailors are groping hither and thither. They have no rudder, and manœuvre is impossible. The *Sémillante*, now left to herself, shoots along like the wind. It was at this moment that the customs officer saw her pass. It is half-past eleven. The frigate hears a noise like the booming of guns in front of her—the breakers! the breakers! All is over—there is no hope—they are heading straight on the coast. The captain goes down to his cabin, and in another minute has resumed his place on the poop—in full-dress. He wishes to put on his best looks to die.

On the underdeck the soldiers, anxious, glance from one to the other but do not speak. The sick ones try to rise—the little corporal has ceased to laugh. At this moment the door opens and the priest appears on the threshold in his stole. "Down on your knees, boys!" All obey, and in a loud voice he repeats the prayer for the perishing at sea.

Suddenly there is a great shock; loud cries—arms stretched out—hands clutched convulsively—wild



faces over which the vision of death has passed in a lightning flash. Heaven have mercy!

It was thus that I passed the night, dreaming, and conjuring up, at a distance of ten years, the soul of the poor vessel whose wrecks lay around me. Far away in the strait the storm was raging, the flame of our bivouac bent to the blast, and I could hear the dancing of our vessel and the creaking of her rope at the foot of the rocks.



## LEGEND OF THE MAN WITH GOLD BRAINS.

*To a lady who asks me for some cheerful stories :*

I read your letter, dear madam, with feelings of compunction. I reproached myself for the half-mourning tint of my little sketches, and said to myself that to-day I would give you something gay, something hilarious.

After all, what right have I to be sad ? I am living at a thousand leagues distance from the fogs of Paris, on a sunshiny little hill, in the country of tambourines and muscat wine. Around me all is sunshine and music. There are orchestras of robins, choristers of titmice, matin songs—"Courelay ! courelay !"—from the curlews ; at mid-day the cicadas, then the herdsmen playing on the fife, the merry laughter of nut-brown maids. In truth, it is a spot ill-chosen for the blue devils. I should be offering you, rather, *couleur-de-rose* poems and baskets of pretty love-stories.

But alas ! I am still too near Paris. Even here in my pines it splashes me every day with its mud. As I write I have just learned the sad end of poor



Charles Barbara, and have put my mill in mourning. Adieu, curlews and cicadas! I have no more heart to be gay. This, madam, is why, in place of the sprightliness I had intended, you will have again to-day only a melancholy legend.

There once lived a man who had brains of gold—yes, madam, of solid gold. When he came into the world the doctors thought he could not live, his head was so heavy and so out of proportion to his size. He did live, however, and grew up like a flourishing olive-plant in the sunshine. Only his large head continually weighed him down, and it was sad to see how he would strike against objects in passing. He often fell, and on one occasion, falling from the top of a flight of stairs and striking his head upon a marble step, it gave out a metallic sound like an ingot. They thought he had killed himself; but he rose, and it was found he had only a trifling wound and a few drops of gold matted in his bright brown hair. This was how the parents first learned that the boy had gold brains.

The amazing discovery was kept a profound secret. Even the boy himself suspected nothing. Now and then he would ask why it was not permitted him to play on the street like other boys.

“They would steal you, my treasure,” replied his mother.



After this a great dread of being stolen possessed the child, and he continued to play all alone, dragging himself heavily from room to room. Not till he had reached his eighteenth year did his parents reveal to him how wonderfully nature had gifted him; and having "cared for him up to that time, they now claimed a share of his gold."

The youth did not hesitate. How he did it the legend does not narrate, but he detached a lump of solid gold from his brain, large as a walnut, and tossed it proudly into his mother's lap. Then dazzled by the knowledge of the riches which he carried in his head, drunk with desires, intoxicated with the sense of power, he went out into the world to squander his treasure.

From the rate at which he now lived, the royal, reckless manner in which he scattered his gold, it might have been supposed that his brain was exhaustless. But it was not so; and as his store diminished, the lustre of his eyes dimmed and his cheeks grew sunken. At last, one evening, after a wild revel, finding himself alone amid the remains of the feast and the fading lights, he observed the ravages which had been made in his ingot, and was terrified. He resolved to stop short in his mad career.

He now began a different life—a sober, retired existence. He worked hard, became timid and



anxious as a miser, avoided temptation, and even strove to forget his fatal riches, which he was resolved to leave intact. But a friend had followed him into his retreat who knew his secret. One night the poor man was wakened out of his sleep by a terrible pain in his head. He started up, bewildered, and in a ray of moonlight he saw his friend hurrying away with something concealed under his cloak.

It was another piece of his brain of which he had been robbed.

It came about, in course of time, that the man with gold brains fell in love, and then it was all over with him. The little blond woman returned his love, but she loved better still her finery, her white plumes, and the pretty red tassels of her boots.

To see his gold melting away in the hands of such a dear creature as this—half-bird, half-doll—was a positive delight. She had every caprice that could enter one's brain, and he could deny her nothing. Such was his fear of paining her that he even kept concealed from her the secret of his riches.

"We are very, very rich, are we not, dear?" she asked.

"Oh yes, very rich!" and he caressed with a smile the little bluebird that was devouring his brain.



At times, however, panic-struck as it were, he wanted to hoard his treasure; but the little woman would dance up to him, and say,

“We are so rich, dear husband, please buy me something costly.”

And he bought her something costly.

This lasted two years; and then one morning the little wife died, no one could tell why—died like a bird. He had nearly reached the end of his treasure, but with what remained of it he gave her a splendid burial. There were bells, carriages hung with black, plumed horses, silver tears in velvet—nothing was too grand. What was his gold to him now? He gave it to the Church, to the bearers, to the venders of immortelles—he gave it everywhere, and without a thought. When he left the graveyard hardly anything remained of this marvellous brain—only a few particles sticking to the sides of his skull.

He walked the streets with a haggard air, staggering like a drunken man; and when evening came and the shops were lighted, he stopped in front of two large windows, with a fine display of stuffs and ornaments glistening in the light, and stood there gazing at a pair of little blue satin boots bordered with swan’s-down. “I know who would like those boots,” he said, smiling to himself; and quite forgetting that his little wife was dead, he entered and bought them.



A man in the back of the shop heard a cry, and came forward quickly; but he started in alarm at sight of a man leaning against the counter, in one hand the blue boots bordered with swan's-down, and holding out the other, all bloody, with scrapings of gold on his nails.

This, madam, is the legend of the man with gold brains.

Despite its somewhat fantastical air, it is true—every word of it. There are persons condemned to live of their brains, and who pay in fine gold out of their marrow and substance for the veriest trifles of existence. For such it is a grief of every day; and when, weary at last of the suffering—

Decidedly, madam, this is a melancholy tale. I will end it here.



## BIXIOU'S POCKET-BOOK.

ONE October morning, soon after my departure from Paris, there came to me while I was at breakfast an old man, shabby, bent, bow-legged, shivering like a wading-bird on his long legs. It was Bixiou; yes, Parisians, your Bixiou, the reckless, hare-brained, delightful Bixiou, who during fifteen years enchanted you with his wild jests, pamphlets, and caricatures. Ah, poor wretch! but for the grimace which he made on entering I should never have recognized him.

With his head on one side and his cane held to his mouth like a clarionet, the forlorn, illustrious old wag advanced to the middle of the room, and said in a piteous tone,

“Pity a poor blind old man!”

It seemed such excellent mimicry that I could not repress a smile.

“Do you think I am jesting? Look at my eyes.”

And he turned towards me two large colorless and sightless balls.

“I am blind, sir, stone-blind for life. So much for writing with vitriol. This pretty business has lost



me my eyes—burned them to the sockets,” he added, pointing to his scorched lids, where not the vestige of a lash remained.

I was too much moved to speak. My silence disquieted him.

“Are you at work?” he asked.

“No, Bixiou, I am breakfasting. Will you join me?”

He did not answer, but the little quiver of his nostrils told me that he was eager to accept. I took his hand and seated him by my side.

While he was being served the poor devil sniffed the breakfast with a little smile.

“It is good, all this. It is long since I have feasted. A penny loaf on my way to the departments in the morning—for I run after the ministers now; that is my only occupation. I am after a tobacco bureau; I cannot allow my family to starve, you know. I can no longer draw nor write, and as for dictating, there is nothing in my head. My work was to watch the grimaces of Paris and imitate them, and as I can no longer do that I thought of the tobacco bureau. Not on the boulevards, you understand; I have no right to claim that favor, being neither the son of a danseuse, nor the widow of a dragoon. No, a little provincial bureau in a distant corner of the Vosges, where I shall smoke a clay pipe, call myself Hans or Zebedee, as in Erkman—Cha-



trian, and console myself for the loss of my own work by making tobacco cornets of the works of my contemporaries.

“This is all I ask; not very much, is it? Well, it is the devil to get, though I have no lack of patrons. I was once well known in the world; I dined at the marshal's, the prince's, the minister's, and was sought after by them all. I amused them, and they feared me. Now, no one fears me. Oh, my eyes! my poor eyes! And no one invites me—it is so sad to sit at table with a blind man! Pass me the bread, please. Ah, the rascals! they make me pay dear for this tobacco business. Here is six months that I have been lounging about the departments with my petition. I arrive in the morning when the fires are being lighted and his excellency's horses are about taking a turn in the court, and leave at night when they bring the lamps and the kitchen begins to smell good. I pass my whole time on the boxes in the antechambers. The ushers know me; at the Interior they call me ‘Ce bon monsieur.’ I buy their good offices by making puns for them. This is what I am reduced to after twenty years of roistering success. And to think that there are forty thousand dogs in France whose mouths water to join our craft. To think that every day a locomotive steams up in the provinces to bring imbeciles by the basketful to Paris, famishing for literature and printed fame.



Ah, poor fools! If the misery of Bixiou might serve you as a warning!"

After a moment's silence he resumed:

"Do you know what is to me the most terrible thing of all? It is, not to be able to read my papers any longer. You would have to be one of us to understand that. Sometimes I buy one in the evening, only to be able to smell the damp paper and fresh news. It is so good! I have no one to read them to me; my wife could, but she will not, she says; there are improper things in the '*fait divers*.' Ah, these ex-mistresses are the greatest of prudes when once they are married! Since I made her Madame Bixiou she has turned devotee, and what with the consecrated bread, the collections, the Sainte-Enfance, the little Chinese, we are over head and ears in good works. I should think it a good work if she would read me my papers; but no! And since I became blind I have entered my daughter at Notre-Dame-des-Arts, to give her a chance to earn a morsel. And here was another piece of fine luck! She hadn't been nine years in the world before she had been through the whole category of complaints, and dull! and ugly!—uglier than I, if you can believe that—a monster—never anything but an expense to me. Ah, I am very good to give you all these family details; what is it to you? When I leave here I am off to the 'Public Instruction.' The ush-



ers there are not so easy to cajole though—all old birds.”

I poured out a glass of brandy for him, and his features softened as he sipped it slowly. What sudden impulse moved him I am unable to guess, but he rose, and raising his glass in his hand turned his viper head slowly around with the ingratiating smile of one about to address an audience. Then in a clear, ringing voice, as if addressing a table at which two hundred guests were seated: “To arts!” “To letters!” “To the press!” and then began a toast which lasted three-quarters of an hour—the wildest, strangest improvisation that ever emanated from even this wizard-like brain.

Fancy a review of the year, entitled, “The Streets of Literature in 186—” —the literary assemblies, rivalries, quarrels, the fumes of ink arising from a hell without angustness where they strangle one another, disembowel one another, plunder one another, where they talk more of profits and big sous than do the tradespeople, and where they starve to death; all the miseries, the meanness, the yearly deaths, the burials “*à reclame*,” the funeral oration of Monsieur the Delegate over a poor wretch for whose grave there is none to pay, the suicides, the madmen—all this detailed, recapitulated, gesticulated, by a lampooner of genius—and you have an idea of Bixiou’s improvisation.

His toast ended and glass drunk, he asked the



hour, and took his departure with a wild look and without taking leave of me. I cannot say what impression he made on M. Duruy's ushers that day, but I had never in my life felt so saddened, so little in the mood for work, as I did after my terrible blind guest had departed. My ink sickened me, my pen filled me with horror. I felt a need to fly, to look at trees, to feel the influence of something good. What bitterness! grand Dieu, what rancor! Why did he have to come to me thus, and slobber over everything, pollute everything!

I paced my chamber in agitation, seeming to hear all the while the sneer of disgust with which the man had spoken of his daughter. Suddenly I felt my foot come in contact with some object by the chair where the blind man had sat. I recognized his pocket-book—a large shining pocket-book, worn and broken at the corners, which he had been accustomed to speak of jestingly as his venom-book. It was as noted as M. Girardin's famous cartoons, and was believed to be the depository of terrible things. It was an excellent opportunity to satisfy my curiosity. Being over-stuffed, it had burst in falling, and the contents spilled on the carpet. I picked up the papers one by one.

There was a little package of letters, written on flowered paper, beginning, "Dear Papa," and signed "Celine Bixiou."



Old prescriptions for children's ailments—croup, convulsions, scarlatina, measles (the poor child had not escaped one).

Lastly, a large sealed envelope, from which a lock of yellow hair was escaping as out of a girl's bonnet, and on the envelope, in a large, trembling hand—a blind man's hand—

“Celine's hair, cut May 13th, the day I entered her at Notre-Dame-des-Arts.”

This was all that Bixiou's pocket-book contained.

Come, Parisians, you are all the same. Disgust, irony, demoniac laughter, wild bluster, ending with, “Celine's hair, cut May 13th.”



## THE POET MISTRAL.

WHEN I rose last Sunday, I could have believed myself in the Rue du Faubourg Montmartre. It was raining, the sky was gray, my mill dark and gloomy. Dreading to pass this chill, rainy day at home, the thought suddenly came into my head to go and warm myself a little at the house of Frederic Mistral, the great Provençal poet, who lives three leagues from my pines.

No sooner thought than done. A myrtle-wood stick, my copy of Montaigne, my cloak, and I am off.

No one was abroad. Our beautiful Catholic Provence suffers her ground to rest on Sundays. Only the dogs were at home. Now and then I would come upon a wagon with its dripping tarpaulin, an old woman in a hood and dead-leaf cape, a cariole full of people on their way to church, drawn by mules in their Sunday rig, with blue and white housings, and through the mist down below I saw a boat on the Rhone, and a fisherman standing in it casting his net.

There was no reading for me on the route that day. The rain fell in torrents and the wind dashed



it in my face by whole bucketfuls. I made the journey without stopping to take breath, and after a three hours' walk I saw before me the little cypress wood which shelters the village of Maillane from the wind.

Not a cat on the village roads—everybody was at high mass. I heard the rumbling of the organ as I passed the church door, and saw the lighting of the candles through the painted windows.

The poet's house is at the farther end of the village, the last on the left on the road to Saint Rémy, a little one-story building, with a garden in front. I opened the door softly. No one! The door of the salon was closed, but I heard some one within walking, and speaking in a loud voice. I knew the step and voice well. I paused in the little whitewashed passage, with my hand on the door-knob, greatly agitated. He is there—he is at work. Shall I enter, or shall I wait till the strophe is finished? No, I will enter.

Ah, Parisians, when the poet of Maillane has come to you to show Paris to his Mireiò, and you have seen in your salons this Chactas in the city coat and straight collar, which oppressed him almost as much as his glory, you have fancied you saw Mistral; but that was not he. There is but one Mistral, and that is the one whom I surprised last Sunday in his village, with his felt hat down over his ears, in a short coat and no vest, a red Catalan *taillole* about his



waist; with a kindling eye, the fire of inspiration on his cheeks, a genial smile, elegant as a Greek shepherd, pacing the room with long strides, and composing verses with his hands in his pockets.

"What! is it you?" he exclaimed, hurrying to greet me. "It is a good wind that brings you to-day. It is the fête-day of Maillane; we are to have music from Avignon, bulls, processions, farandole: it will be fine. My mother is now on her way from mass. We will breakfast, and then go to see the girls dance."

While he was speaking I looked around with emotion on the little room with its light upholstery, which I had not seen for so long and where I had passed so many pleasant hours. Nothing was changed. There was the same sofa with yellow cushions, the same straw arm-chairs, the Venus without arms and the Venus of Arles on the mantel, the portrait of the poet by Hébert and his photograph by Etienne Carjat, in a corner by the window his writing-table—a poor little office-table—covered with dictionaries and musty old books. In the middle of this table I remarked a large open blank book. It was "Calendal," Frederic Mistral's new poem, which is to appear at the end of the year. Mistral has been seven years working at this poem, and it is now nearly six months since the last strophe was finished; but still he cannot bring himself to part with it. There is always a



line to be polished, a rhyme to be made more resonant. Writing in Provençal though he does, he takes as much pains with every line as if it was to be read in the original by the whole world, and the beauty of the workmanship recognized. Oh, the worthy poet! It was of Mistral that Montaigne might have said, "Recollect the man who when asked why he took so much pains in an art that could come to the knowledge of so few, replied, 'A few will be enough—one will be enough—not one will be enough.'"

I held in my hands the manuscript of "Calendal," and turned its leaves with a heart full of emotion. Suddenly there was a noise of fifes and drums in the street before the window, and Mistral hurried to his closet, took from it some bottles and glasses, pulled his table into the centre of the room, and as he opened the door to the musicians, turned to me and said, "Do not laugh; they have come to give me a serenade; I am a member of the town council."

The little room was soon full of people. They placed their drums in the chairs, the flag in a corner, and the old wine passed around. Then, a few bottles having been emptied to the health of Monsieur Frederic, they discussed the fête with formal gravity—whether the farandole would be as pretty as last year, and whether the bulls would do well—and then departed to serenade the rest of the councillors. At this moment Mistral's mother arrived.



The table was spread in a trice—a beautiful white linen cloth, and two plates. I knew the habits of the house, and that Mistral's mother never appeared at table when there were guests. The old lady knew only her Provençal, and was not at ease in the company of Frenchmen. Besides, her presence was needed in the kitchen.

What a charming repast we had that morning—a piece of roast kid, some mountain cheese, grape jam, figs, and muscat grapes, the whole watered by the delicious Chateauneuf-des-papes which is such a beautiful ruby red in the glass.

During dessert I went and brought the manuscript of "Calendal" to the table.

"We are to go out, you know," said the poet, with a smile.

"No, no. 'Calendal!' 'Calendal!'"

Mistral resigned himself, and in his soft melodious voice, beating the measure of his lines with his hand, he began the first canto, "Of a maiden mad for love—and now that that sad story is told—I would sing you that of a youth of Cassis—a poor little anchovy fisher."

Outside, the bells were ringing for vespers, crackers were exploding on the square, fifes and drums passing to and fro, and the bulls from Camargue roaring as they were hurried along. I, with my elbows leaning on the table and my eyes filled with tears, listened to the tale of the Provençal fisher-lad.



Calendal was a simple fisher-boy of whom love made a hero. To win the heart of his angel, the beautiful Estérelle, he wrought prodigies compared with which the twelve labors of Hercules were mere trifles. To win himself riches he invented powerful engines and dragged all the fishes of the sea into port. At another time the terrible bandit of Ollioules, Count Sévéran, is driven back to his eyrie with his cutthroats and concubines. A doughty youth was this Calendal. One day at Sainte-Baume he came upon two bands who were on the point of settling a dispute with blows over the tomb of Maître Jacques, a Provençal who made the framework of Solomon's temple, if you please! Calendal rushed into the midst of the carnage, and by his persuasions appeased the combatants.

High up amid the cliffs of Lure grew an inaccessible forest of cedars, where never wood-cutter dared set his foot. But Calendal did. He made it his abode for thirty days; for thirty days the sound of his axe could be heard burying itself in the trees. The forests roared, as one by one its giants fell, and when Calendal descended only a single cedar was left on the mountain.

At last, as the reward of his valorous deeds, he won the love of his Estérelle, and was made consul by the inhabitants of Cassis. This is the story of Calendal; but what of Calendal? What the poem



gives us, above all, is Provence—the Provence of the mountains, with the history, the legends, the landscapes of a simple free people that has found its great poet before it passed away. And now build your railways, set up your telegraph-posts, banish from the schools the Provençal tongue. Provence will live forever in Mireiò and in Calendal.

“Enough of poetry!” said Mistral, closing his book. “We must go and see the fête.”

We went out. The whole village was in the streets. A brisk north wind had swept the sky, and the sun shone brightly on the red roofs soaked with rain. We arrived in time to witness the procession return. For an hour there was an interminable train of muffled penitents, white, blue, and gray; veiled sisterhoods; red banners with gilt flowers; large images with worn gilding borne on the shoulders of four men; saints in colored faience, like idols, with large bouquets in their hands; copes, monstrances, green velvet daises—all waving to the breeze amid the light of candles, sunshine, chants, liturgies, and the ringing of bells.

When the procession was over, and the saints restored to their shrines, we went to see the bulls, and then the pretty series of Provençal games. It was night when we returned to the village. On the square before the café, where Mistral plays his game



with his friend Zédore in the evening, a large bonfire was burning. They were preparing for the farandole; lanterns of cut paper were everywhere illuminating the darkness. Soon the young people took their place, and, at the summons of the drum, a mad, frenzied *ronde* began around the bonfire, to be kept up all night.

After supper was over, too tired to resume our rambles, we withdrew to Mistral's chamber. It is a modest peasant's room, with two large beds, no paper on the walls, and the joists of the ceiling bare. Four years ago, when the author of "*Mireiò*" received a gift of three thousand francs from the Academy, Madame Mistral proposed a carpet and ceiling for the chamber.

"No, no," answered Mistral, "that is poet's money; we must not touch it."

And the room remained bare, but, so long as the poet's money lasted, Mistral's door was never closed to any who knocked.

I brought the manuscript of "*Calendal*" to the chamber, and begged Mistral to read me one more passage before I slept; and while he was reading his verses to me in the beautiful Provençal tongue, more than three-fourths Latin, which queens have spoken and which now only our peasants understand, I was filled with wonder and admiration as I thought of the



ruin in which he found his mother tongue, and what he has done with it. I pictured to myself one of these old palaces of the Princes of Beaux, as we see them in the Alps—palaces without roofs, steps without balusters, windows without glasses, the blazonry of the gates corroded by moss, poultry picking in the front court, pigs wallowing under the colonettes of the galleries, asses browsing in the grass growing in the chapel, pigeons drinking rain out of holy-water fonts, and lastly, a few peasants' huts built in the rear of the ruins.

And then I saw how, one day, the son of one of these peasants, enamoured of these stately ruins, indignant at seeing them thus profaned, chases the pigs and cattle out of the court, and, the fays coming to his aid, rebuilds with his own toils the grand staircase, restores the wood-work to the walls, the glasses to the windows, reinstates the towers, regilds the hall of the throne, and conjures into existence the vast palace of other days, where popes and emperors have lodged.

This restored palace is the Provençal tongue.

This peasant's son is Mistral.



## THE TWO INNS.

I WAS returning from Nîmes one July afternoon. The heat was intense. Far as the eye could reach, the white, hot, dusty road was powdering the olive gardens and young oaks beneath the dead-silver sun that filled, as it were, the whole heavens. There was not a spot of shade, not a breath of air, nothing but the vibrations of the heated atmosphere and the shrill cry of the cicadas. I had walked for two hours through a perfect desert, when suddenly a group of houses loomed up out of the dust. It was a place which they called Saint Vincent's Relay, and consisted of five or six farm-houses, with long, red-roofed barns, a dry trough in the middle of a clump of gaunt fig-trees, and at the end of the hamlet two large inns facing each other on either side of the road.

There was something striking in the appearance and proximity of these two inns. On one side of the road a large, new building, all animation, the doors standing open, the smoking diligence horses being unharnessed, the travellers alighting and taking a hasty drink in the short shadow of the walls; the yard encumbered with mules and carts, wagoners



resting in the shade while waiting for fresh teams; within, exclamations, striking of glasses, popping of corks, oaths, and above all the din a sonorous voice which made the windows rattle, singing,

“ La belle Margoton  
Tout matin s'est levée,  
A pris son broc d'argent,  
À l'eau s'en est allée.”

The inn on the opposite side was silent and deserted. The grass was growing under its gate, the shutters were broken, a musty branch of holly was hanging over the door, the steps were propped with bricks picked up on the road—all was so poor, so pitiful, it seemed a positive charity to stop there and ask for a drink.

On entering I found a long, deserted, dingy room, appearing all the dingier and more deserted from the blinding light that streamed through its three bare windows. There were a few rickety tables, upon which stood some glasses dim with dust, a broken billiard-table, with its four pockets standing out like bowls, a yellow divan, and an old desk—all fast asleep in the close, unwholesome heat.

And the flies! Never had I beheld the like! They were clustered like grapes on the ceiling and windows, and in the glasses. There was a buzzing when I opened the door, as if I had entered a beehive.



A woman was standing in the recess of a window at one end of the room, leaning her head against the panes and gazing out.

I called twice, "Halloo! landlady!"

She turned slowly, and I saw a wrinkled, cracked, earth-colored face, framed in long barbs of the russet lace worn by the old women among us. She was not an old woman, however. It was grief and tears that had faded her.

"What do you want?" she asked, wiping her eyes.

"I want to sit a while and have something to drink."

She looked at me, astonished, without stirring from the spot, as though she failed to comprehend.

"Is not this an inn?" I asked.

The woman sighed. "Yes, if you will. But why do you not go across the road like all the rest? It is more cheerful there."

"It is too gay for me. I like it better here."

And without waiting for an answer I seated myself at a table.

When, at last, she had satisfied herself that I was in earnest, she began bustling about with a very busy air, moving bottles, wiping glasses, driving off the flies. Evidently a guest was an unaccustomed event. Now and then the poor woman would pause as if in despair. Finally she passed into a back room, and I



heard a rattling of keys, a tormenting of locks, rum-maging in a bread-box, blowing, dusting, wiping of plates, and from time to time a deep sigh or half-suppressed sob.

After a quarter of an hour of this house-keeping, I had before me a plate of passerilles (dried grapes), an old loaf hard as a brick, and a bottle of piquette.

“You are served, sir,” said the strange creature, and turning away she resumed with haste her place at the window.

While I was drinking I made an attempt to engage her in conversation.

“You have not many guests, I fear, my poor woman,” said I.

“Oh! no, sir, none at all. It used to be different when we were the only ones; we had relays, there were hunting parties here in the season, wagoners all the year round; but since our neighbors across the road came we have lost them all. They find it dull here, and, in fact, the house is not gay. I am not pretty, I have fevers, my little ones are dead; but over there they laugh and joke all the time. The inn is kept by a woman from Arles, a handsome woman, with lace and a gold chain three double around her neck. The driver of the diligence is her lover, and she has a crowd of wheedling girls for chambermaids. So they all go to her—all the young people from Bezouçes, Redassan, Jonquières. The



wagoners go out of their way to pass by there, and I—I stay here all alone, wasting away.”

She said this listlessly, with an absent air, still pressing her forehead against the panes. Evidently there was something in the inn across the way that preoccupied her mind. Suddenly there was a confusion and stir. The diligence was about setting off in a cloud of dust. I heard the cracking of a whip, exclamations from the postilion, girls calling out as they hurried to the door, “*Adiousias! adiousias!*” and then the same voice resumed more lustily:

“A pris son broc d’argent  
À l’eau s’en est allée;  
De la n’a vu venir,  
Trois chevaliers d’armée.”

At the sound of this voice my hostess trembled all over and turned to me.

“Did you hear that?” she asked, in a low voice. “That is my husband. Doesn’t he sing well?”

I looked at her, stupefied.

“Your husband! He goes over there too!”

In a heart-broken accent, but with great gentleness, she answered,

“What would you have, sir? The men are all like that. They don’t like the sight of tears, and since the little ones died, I do nothing but weep. And then this great barrack, where nobody ever



comes, is so gloomy, and when he finds it too dull my poor José goes over there for a drink; he has a fine voice and the woman from Arles makes him sing for her. Hist! there he is beginning again!"

And trembling and stretching out her arms, the woman stood before the window, looking uglier than ever with the great tears filling her eyes, listening in ecstasy to her José singing for the Arles woman:

"Le premier lui a dit  
Bonjour, belle mignonne."



## AT MILIANAH.

### NOTES OF TRAVEL.

THIS time I will invite you to pass a day with me in a pretty town in Algiers. It will be a change from drums and cicadas.

It is going to rain. The sky is gray, and the peaks of Mount Zaccar are enveloped in mist—a gloomy Sunday. The window of my little room looks out on the Arab ramparts. I try to amuse myself with smoking cigarettes. The library of the hotel has been placed at my disposal, and in the collection—consisting of a register and a few volumes by Paul de Kock—I espy an odd volume of Montaigne. After rereading the admirable essay on “The Idiot’s Death,” I find myself more dreamy and out of spirits than before. A few drops of rain have already begun to fall. Each drop makes a great star on the dust which has been accumulating on my window-sill since last year’s rains. My book glides from my hands, and I pass long minutes gazing at these melancholy stars.

The village clock strikes two—an ancient marabout of which I can distinguish from here the



thin bare walls. Poor marabout ! Who would have prophesied, thirty years ago, that it would one day bear in the middle of its great breast a large municipal dial-plate, and give the signal to the churches of Milianah to ring for vespers. Ding ! dong ! There are the bells off, and we shall not have the end of it for some time. Decidedly, this room is gloomy. The great spiders, called "philosophers' thoughts," have woven their webs in all the corners. I am going out.

On the principal square the band of the Third Regiment, paying no heed to a little rain, is ranging itself around its leader. The sub-prefect is walking back and forth on the arm of the justice of the peace. A few half-naked little Arabs are playing marbles in a corner, shouting vociferously. Yonder comes a ragged old Jew, astonished not to find the ray of sunshine he left here yesterday. One ! two ! three ! The music strikes up—an old Talaxy mazurka, which the hand-organs played under my window a year ago. It annoyed me then ; to-day it moves me to tears.

How happy they are—these musicians of the Third ! With their eyes fixed on their semiquavers, drunk with rhythm and noise, they have no thought beyond the counting of their bars ; their whole soul is in the square of paper, large as one's hand, fluttering between the notches at the end of their instru-



ment. Everything is there for these brave fellows; there is no homesickness in the national airs they play. Alas! I who do not belong to the music am pained by it and move away.

What can I do with this gloomy Sunday afternoon? Sid 'Omar's shop is open. I will enter.

Though he keeps a shop, Sid 'Omar is not a shop-keeper. He is a prince of the blood, son of a former dey of Algiers, who was strangled by his Janissaries. On the death of his father Sid 'Omar took refuge in Milianah with his mother, whom he adored, and lived there like a great seigneur philosopher, with his hounds, falcons, horses, and women, in a pretty palace with orange-trees and fountains. Then came the French. Sid 'Omar, at first our enemy and the ally of Abd-el-Kader, quarrelled with the latter, and tendered his submission to us. The emir revenged himself by pillaging Sid 'Omar's palace in his absence, cutting down his orange-trees, carrying off his women and horses, and having his mother's head crushed under a large chest. Sid 'Omar's anger was terrible. He enlisted in the French service, and we had not a more formidable and ferocious soldier while the war lasted. When it ended he returned to Milianah, and to this day he turns pale and his eyes flash at the mention of Abd-el-Kader's name.

Sid 'Omar is sixty years old, but in spite of age and the small-pox he is still handsome. He has



long lashes, an expression like a woman's, a charming smile, and the air of a prince. Ruined by the war, nothing remains to him of his former opulence but a farm in the plains of Chelif, and a house at Milianah, where he lives with his three sons like any citizen. He is highly revered by the native chiefs, is chosen as arbiter of their disputes, and his decision is law for them nearly always. He goes out little, but is to be seen every afternoon in a shop attached to his house, with whitewashed walls, a circular bench, divans, long pipes, and two braziers. It is here that Sid 'Omar holds his court and administers justice.

This Sunday afternoon the attendance is numerous. A dozen chiefs in their bernouses are squatting around the hall, each with a pipe by his side and a little cup of coffee in a filagree egg-shell. No one stirs as I enter. Sid 'Omar greets me from his seat with the most charming smile, and invites me to a place by him on a yellow silk divan. Then, with his finger on his lips, he signs me to listen.

The case he is hearing is this: The caïd of the Beni-Zougzougs having had a dispute with a Jew of Milianah over a piece of land, the two parties agreed to carry their difference before Sid 'Omar, and submit to his decision. The day of meeting was appointed and the witnesses summoned, when all at once our Jew, having reconsidered the matter,



enters without witnesses and declares that he prefers to carry his cause to the French *juge de paix*. The affair is at this point when I arrive.

The Jew, an old man, with a cadaverous beard, a maroon vest, velvet cap, and blue stockings, throws back his head, rolls his eyes imploringly, falls on his knees, kisses Sid 'Omar's babouches, clasps his hands. I do not understand Arabic, but from the constant repetition of "Zouge de paix, zouge de paix," I guess the remainder of the eloquent discourse. "We do not distrust Sid 'Omar; Sid 'Omar is wise, Sid 'Omar is just, but the 'zouge de paix' will better manage our affair."

The indignant audience remains impassible, like an Arab that it is. Extended on his cushion, his eyes closed, his amber pipe in his mouth, Sid 'Omar, an image of the god of irony, smiles as he listens. Suddenly, in the midst of his most eloquent period, the Jew is interrupted by an emphatic "*Caramba!*" which stops him short. At the same time a Spaniard quits his seat, and approaching the Iscariot, discharges at him a whole volley of imprecations in all the languages, among others certain French vocables too gross to be repeated. The son of Sid 'Omar, who understands French, quits the hall at hearing such language in the presence of his father—a noteworthy feature of Arab manners.

The audience is still impassible, Sid 'Omar is still



smiling. The Jew rises and begins leaving the room backward, trembling in every limb and still chirping his eternal "Zouge de paix, zouge de paix!" The Spaniard, in a fury, rushes after him, comes up with him in the street, and administers two blows full in his face. Iscariot falls on his knees and crosses his arms. The Spaniard returns to the shop a trifle ashamed. The Jew rises, looks sheepishly at the motley group around him of every hue—Maltese, Negro, Turk, Arab, all one in their hatred of the Jew and willingness to see him insulted. Iscariot hesitates an instant, then laying hold of an Arab's *bernouse*: "You were there, Achmed; you saw him strike me. You will be witness for me."

The Arab repulses him, drawing away his *bernouse*. He knows nothing about it, he has seen nothing—he turned his head just at that moment.

"But you, Kaddour, you saw it; you saw the Christian strike me." The negro makes a contemptuous gesture and moves away—he has seen nothing. Neither did the little Maltese see anything, whose jet black eyes gleam maliciously beneath his cap, nor this Turk with the brick-dust complexion, who runs off laughing with his basket of pomegranates on his head. It is to no purpose that the Jew cries, beseeches, writhes—not one of them has seen anything. Luckily, however, two of his co-religionists chance that way just at this moment, walking close to the



walls with their eyes on the ground. The Jew espies them. "Quick! quick! brothers! come with me to the *homme d'affaires*, the *zouge de paix*; you saw him strike an old man!"

"Saw him! should think we did!"

There is great tumult and excitement in Sid 'Omar's shop. The *cafétier* is refilling the cups and lighting the pipes. The talk and laughter is most animated. It is so amusing to see a Jew thrashed! In the midst of the confusion and smoke I make my escape. I wish to hang around the old Israelite, and observe how his co-religionists will treat the affront to their brother. "Come and dine with me to-day, *moussieur*," said Sid 'Omar to me. I accept with thanks and depart.

Everybody is astir in the Jews' quarter; the affair has already made a great noise. The stalls are deserted. Tailors, embroiderers, harness-makers, all Israel is in the street; the men in their velvet caps and blue woollen hose, gathered in groups, talking and gesticulating vehemently; the women, pale, and straight as wooden idols in their scant gowns with gold plastrons, their faces encircled in black bandlets, move whiningly from group to group. As I arrive a great movement has just taken place. The Jew, the hero of the occasion, leaning on the arms of his witnesses, passes between two rows of caps amid a



shower of exhortations. "Avenge yourself, brother! Avenge the Jewish people! Fear nothing, you have the law on your side."

A hideous dwarf, smelling of leather, oil, and wax, approaches me with a piteous air and heaving deep sighs. "See how they treat us poor Jews. Look, they have nearly murdered him!"

In truth the poor Iscariot, as he passed by me with his dull eye and haggard face, dragging himself along rather than walking, did seem more dead than alive. The only remedy capable of reaching his case is a handsome indemnity—and they are carrying him, not to a medical man but to a lawyer.

The number of lawyers in Algiers is large; they are in fact nearly as numerous as the grasshoppers. The business is profitable, and then it has the advantage that you go right into it without examination or probation. In Algiers they make lawyers much as in Paris they make men of letters. All that is needed is a little French, Spanish, and Arabic, a code in the holster and the possession of certain aptitudes. The lawyer's functions are very varied. He is by turns advocate, broker, commissioner, expert, public writer—he is the *Maître Jacques* of the colony: only Harpagon has but one *Maître Jacques*, while the colony has more than it needs. In general, to avoid the expense of an office, these gentlemen receive their clients at the café on the public square.



It was towards this café that the worthy Iscariot was wending his way with a witness on each side. We will not follow them.

Leaving the Jews' quarter, I passed in front of the Arab bureau. With its slate roof and the French flag floating over it, it might be taken for a village mayoralty. I know the dragoman, and will enter and have a smoke with him.

The front court is filled with ragged Arabs. There are some fifty of them waiting for an audience, squatting the length of the wall in their bernouses. This Bedouin antechamber, notwithstanding that it is in the open air, exhales a strong smell of human flesh. I pass quickly along. In the bureau I find the dragoman in the hands of two disputants, quite naked beneath their dirty cloaks, who are telling some story of a stolen rosary, and gesticulating violently. I seat myself on a mat in the corner and look on. A pretty costume this of the dragoman, and the dragoman of Milianah sets it off well, the two seem made for each other. The costume is sky blue, with black frogs and bright gold buttons; the dragoman is fair, fresh, and curly-haired—a handsome hussar full of humor and conceits, a trifle garrulous (he speaks so many tongues!), a little sceptical (he has made the acquaintance of Rénan at the Orientalist school), a lover of sport, as much at his ease in an Arab bivouac as at the sub-prefect's soirées, dancing and mak-



ing couscous to perfection—in a word, a Parisian. Here is my man, and it will be no matter of surprise that the ladies adore him.

Decidedly this story of the stolen rosary promises to be long. I shall not wait for the end of it.

When I leave the house, I find the antechamber all in commotion. They are crowding round a tall, pale native, draped in a black bernouse, who looks very proud. He fought a panther a week ago in the Zaccar. The panther is dead, but the man's arm has been torn almost to pieces. Every morning he comes to the Arab quarter to have it dressed, and every time they stop him in the court and make him rehearse his story. He speaks slowly, in a fine guttural voice, occasionally putting aside his bernouse and showing his left arm fastened to his breast and covered with bandages.

I have hardly reached the street when a violent storm sets in—rain, thunder, lightning, sirocco. I enter a gate at hazard and find myself in the midst of a nest of vagrants piled up under the arcades of a Moorish court. This court, the habitual resort of the Mussulman paupers, belongs to the mosk of Milianah, and is called the Court of the Poor.

Big lean hounds covered with vermin crouch around me with a malicious air. Resting against one of the pillars of the gallery, I try to put a good face on it and watch the rain splattering back from



the colored flagging. The ragamuffins lie piled up on the ground. Near me is a young woman, almost beautiful, her throat and limbs bare, large iron bracelets on her wrists and ankles, singing a strange air composed of three melancholy nasal notes. As she sings she nurses a red bronze infant, and with the arm that is free piles barley in a stone mortar. The rain, driven by a remorseless wind, inundates the limbs of the nurse and body of the nurseling, but paying no heed to it she continues to sing and to pile the barley.

The storm abates. Profiting by the lull, I hasten to leave the court and direct my steps towards Sid 'Omar's. It is dinner-time. In crossing the public square, I again meet the old Jew. He is leaning on the arm of his lawyer, his witnesses following exultantly, and a troop of ugly little Jews caracoling around him. The faces of all are radiant. The lawyer has taken charge of the case, and will demand two thousand francs indemnity.

The dinner is sumptuous at Sid 'Omar's. The dining-room opens on an elegant Moorish court where several fountains are singing. Among other dishes I remark chicken *aux amandes*, couscous, and terrapin, and the honey biscuits which they call *bouchées du kadi*. In the way of wine, nothing but champagne. Despite the Mussulman law Sid 'Omar drinks a little—when his servants' backs are turned.



Dinner being ended, we pass into our host's chamber, where comfitures, pipes, and coffee are served. The furniture is of the simplest description: a divan and a few mats; in the rear a very tall bed, on which are some small red cushions embroidered with gold. On the wall hangs an old Turkish painting representing the exploits of a certain Admiral Hamadi. In Turkey only one color is used in painting. This picture is devoted to green. The sea, sky, ships, the admiral himself, are all green, and such green!

Arab etiquette requires us to withdraw early. The coffee drunk and pipes smoked, I wish my host good-night, and leave him with his women.

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Where shall I end my evening? It is too early to retire, the spahi's clarions have not yet sounded tattoo. Besides, Sid 'Omar's little gold cushions are dancing farandoles before my eyes and keep me awake. I find myself in front of the theatre. I will enter a moment.

The theatre of Milianah is an old storage depot, passably well disguised as a playhouse. Large argand lamps, which they fill with oil between the acts, perform the office of lights. In the pit the spectators stand, in the orchestra they sit on benches; the galleries are very proud of their straw chairs. All around the hall runs a long dark corridor with-



out seats. The play has begun. To my surprise, the actors are not bad—the men, I mean; they have life and spirit. Nearly all are amateurs, soldiers of the Third. The regiment is very proud of them, and comes every evening to applaud them. As for the women, it is the old story of the provincial theatres—pretentious, exaggerated, false. Among the actresses two, however, interest me; they are very young, *débutantes* on the stage. Their parents are in the hall and are enchanted, convinced that their daughters will earn millions of duros at this business. The legend of Rachel, a Jewess, millionaire, and actress, is already current among them.

Nothing could be more touchingly comical than the sight of these two little Jewesses on the boards, keeping timidly to one side of the stage, powdered, painted, low-necked, and shamefaced, from time to time gabbling off a phrase without understanding it, and gazing stupidly out into the hall with their large Hebraic eyes.

I quit the theatre. Out of the surrounding darkness I hear cries in a corner of the square. No doubt some Maltese, explaining themselves with stabs.

I return slowly to the hotel, walking along the ramparts. Delicious scents of orange and thaja rise from the plain. The air is soft, the sky almost clear. Yonder, at the farther end of the road, rises



an old phantom of a wall, the remains of some ancient temple. This wall is sacred. Every day women come to suspend there some votive offering—fragments of haiks and foutas, long tresses of red hair tied with silver threads, skirts of bernouses—all floating in a slender ray of moonlight in the soft breath of night.



## HOMESICKNESS.

THIS morning I was roused with the first glimmer of dawn by the furious rolling of a drum.

A drum here in my pines at such an hour! That is something strange indeed!

I sprang quickly out of bed and ran to open the door. There was no one. The noise had ceased. Two or three curlews were fluttering in the wet vines, and shaking their wings, a soft breeze was singing in the trees. In the east the sun was slowly struggling out of a golden mist on the sharp peaks of the Alps. A first ray was already gilding the roof of my mill. The invisible drum strikes up again. Ran-plan-plan! ran-plan-plan!

Deuce take the idiot! I had forgotten him. But who can he be, this barbarian that comes here with his drum to salute the morning sun from the depths of the woods? I look about me in vain—no one—nothing but the tufts of lavender and the pine-woods descending to the foot of the hill. Perhaps some goblin has hidden himself in the brush to make sport of me. Ariel no doubt, or Master Puck. He said to himself as he passed, "This Parisian is too quiet



and contented here; we will tease him a little!" And with that he took his big drum and—ran-plan-plan! ran-plan-plan! Will you be quiet, imp? You will wake up my cicadas.

It was not Puck. It was Gougnet François, nicknamed Pistolet, drummer of the Thirty-first, on a fortnight's leave. Pistolet has grown tired of the country, suffers with homesickness, and when he can borrow the town drum goes into the woods to beat it, while he dreams of Prince Eugene's barracks.

It is on my little hill that he has come to dream to-day. There he stands, straight as a pine-tree, with his drum between his legs. Flocks of frightened partridges start up at his feet, but he does not see them; the scent of lavender fills the air, but he does not know it.

Neither does he see the cobwebs trembling in the sun among the branches, nor the pine needles that leap upon his drum. Lost in his dreaming and drumming, he gazes lovingly at his stick as it flies, and with each roll his broad simpleton face expands with satisfaction.

Ran-plan-plan! ran-plan-plan!

How beautiful is the great barracks, with its large flag-stones, long rows of windows, inhabitants in grenadier-caps, and its low arcades full of the noise of platters!

Ran-plan-plan! ran-plan-plan!



Oh, the sounding stairway, the whitewashed corridors, the crowded, odorous dormitory, the polishing of belts, the blacking of pots, the bread-plates, the iron beds with their gray coverlets, the guns shining on the rack!

Ran-plan-plan! ran-plan-plan!

Oh, the long nights of sentinel watch, the old sentry-box with the rain pouring in, the cold feet, the fine carriages splashing you as they pass. And then the extras—the days spent in the stocks, the plank pillow, the beating of the reveillé on cold, rainy days, the tattoos in the fog, the men hurrying in out of breath!

Ran-plan-plan! ran-plan-plan!

Oh, the woods of Vincennes, the white cotton gloves, the walks on the ramparts, the drill-yard, the vivandières, the absinthe, the confidences between two hiccups, the sentimental songs, sung with one hand on the heart!

Dream on, poor man!—it is not for me to hinder you. Strike your drum boldly—it is not I who can afford to laugh at you. If you are homesick for your barracks, am not I also for mine?

My Paris pursues me, as yours does you. What sorry Provençals do we make! Yonder in our Paris we shall sigh for our blue Alps and the scent of wild lavender; but here in Provence we long for our barracks, and everything that recalls them to us is dear.



The village clock strikes eight. Pistolet starts to return. As he descends the hill I hear him still drumming, while I, here in my grass, tormented with homesickness, seem to see my Paris defiling away in the pines to the sound of the drum.

Ah! Paris—Paris—forever Paris!

THE END.



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
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